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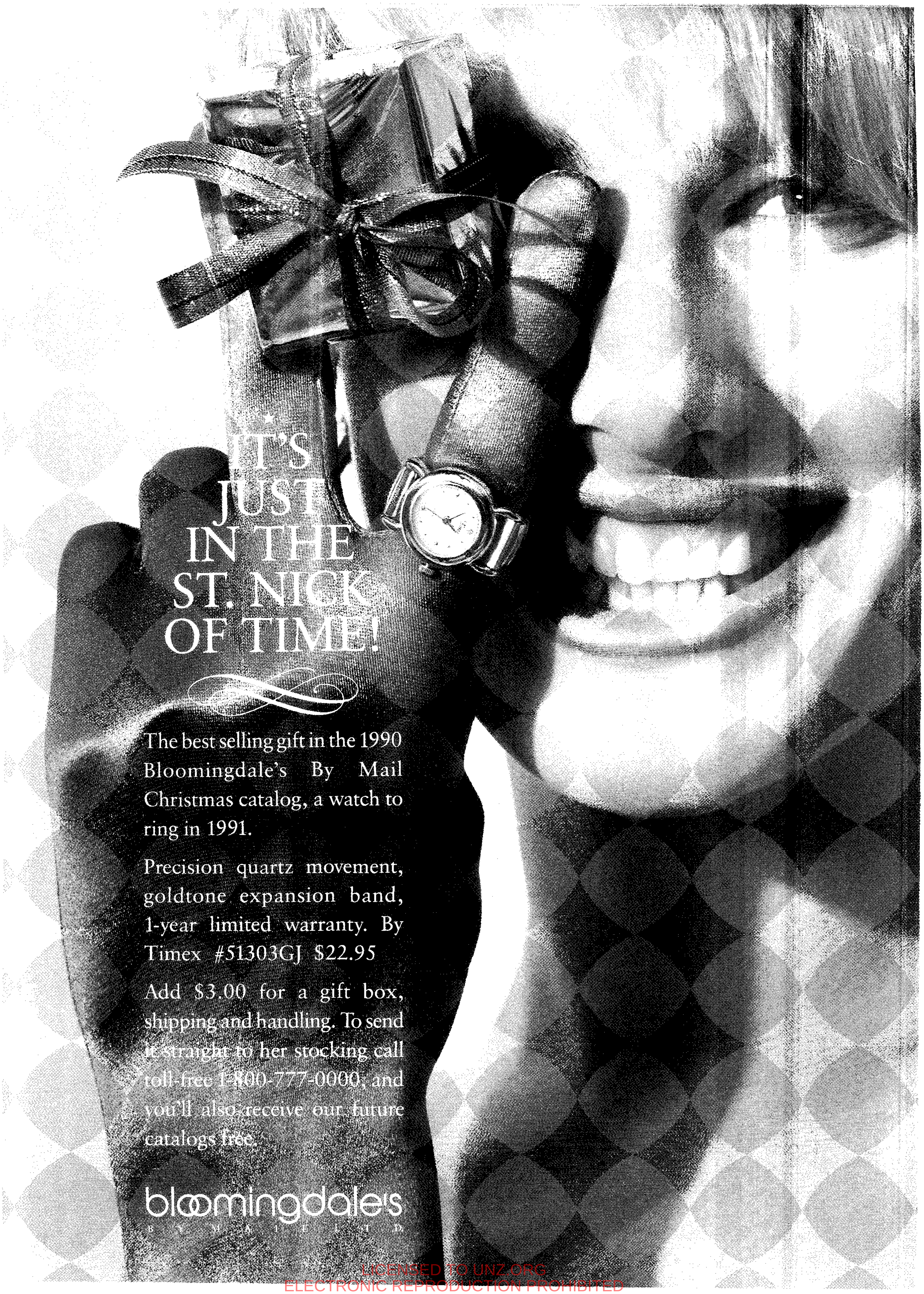

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECEMBER 10, 1990

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4
THE TALK OF THE TOWN 43
"THE BIRDS FOR CHRISTMAS" . . . . *Mark Richard* 48
"NEAR FORT BLANCO" . . . . *Sarah Gaddis* 50
"STUB OF A RED PENCIL" (POEM) . . . . *Charles Simic* 52
PROFILES (DENNIS RIVERA) . . . . *A. H. Raskin* 54
"NOR AM I WHO I WAS THEN" (POEM) . . . . *Susan Elizabeth Howe* 58
A REPORTER AT LARGE (POLAND) . . . . *Lawrence Weschler* 86
"AND TO SEE THE CITY AGAIN" (POEM) . . . . *Patrizia Cavalli* 96
THE THEATRE . . . . *Edith Oliver, Mimi Kramer* 138
ON AND OFF THE AVENUE (CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR CHILDREN) 140
BOOKS . . . . *George Steiner* 153
  BRIEFLY NOTED 158

COVER: *Devera Ehrenberg*

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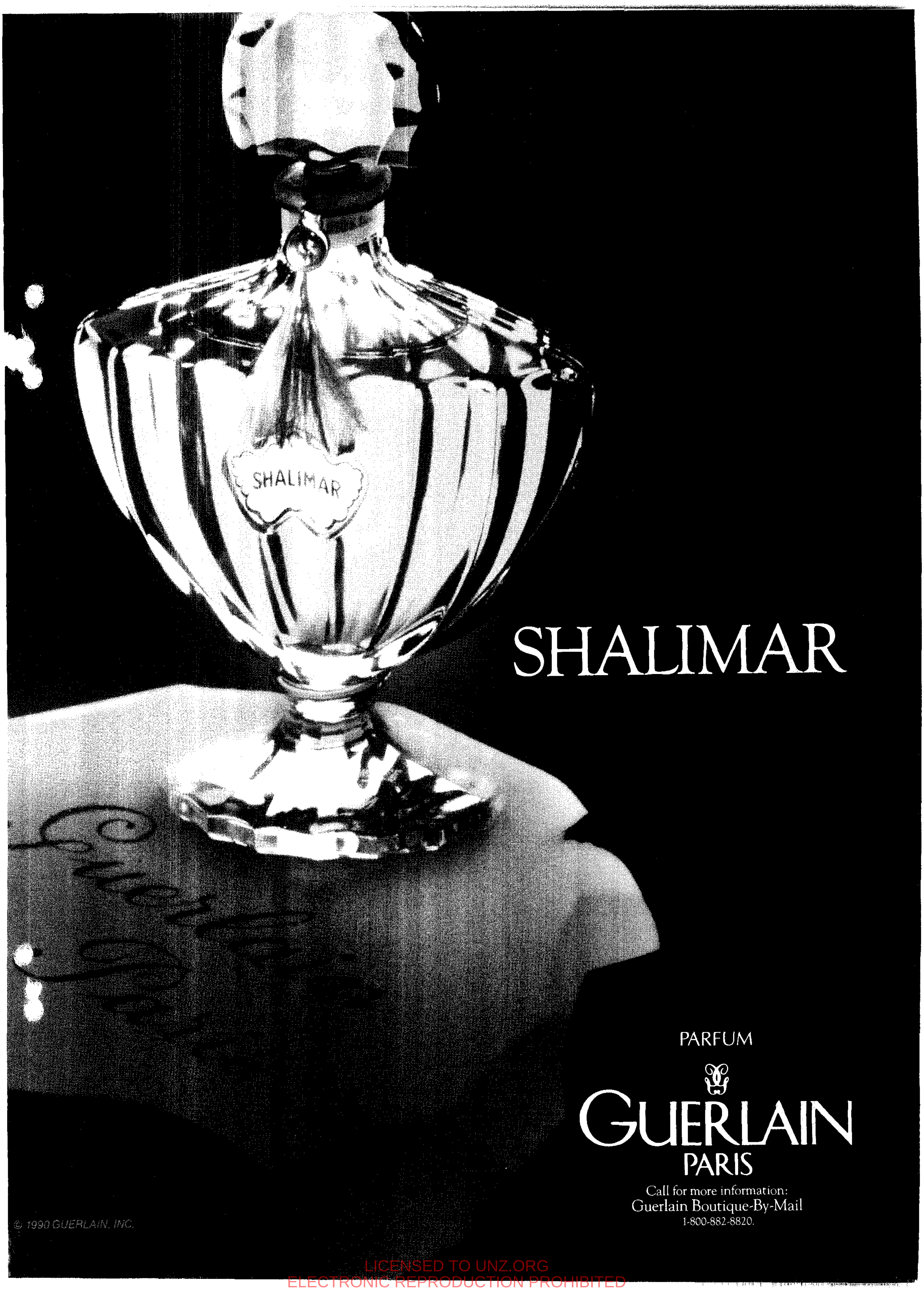
THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Stuart H. Jason, vice-president and treasurer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Frank Mustacato, vice-president and circulation director; Virginia L. Jespersen, vice-president and general manager; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, vice-president and advertising director; Matthew D. Roberts, vice-president and marketing director; Pamela H. Older, vice-president and director of manufacturing. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada. M5E 1M2. Carol Orr & Co., Publishers Representative: 3300 Oak Lawn, Suite 500, Dallas, Tx. 75219. Vol. LXVI, No. 43, December 10, 1990. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. © 1990 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The magazine's name, logo, and various titles and headings herein have been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $50.00. Other foreign, one year, $56.00, payable in advance.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322.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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

TINKERING with a classic play's time or place has become so common that one hardly flinches at the idea of it. When was the last time you saw Shakespeare, for example, performed in the author's specified setting? Chekhov, on the other hand, has usually been served up straight. There are exceptions, of course. In 1950, Joshua Logan transplanted "The Cherry Orchard" from a Russian estate to a Louisiana plantation; the move produced "The Wisteria Trees," overseen by Miss Helen Hayes. Now the RAPP Arts Center brings us "The Seagull: The Hamptons: 1990." Before you wince, be advised that this play is an "adaptation," by R. Jeffrey Cohen, and that an adapter has some license to reinvent. Consider also that the major concerns of Chekhov's play are artistic ambition and unrequited love. What better place to dramatize such themes than the fifty-mile strip between Westhampton and Montauk?

There's no shortage in that region of real-life models for the leading roles: the aging actress, the fun-loving scribe, the landowner's daughter. As for the other major character—the young writer whose work is filled with vague, confusing symbols and poetic driftwood—well, East Hampton alone produces this type in spades. Only the writer's dramatic fate—romantic entanglements leading to a famous final line ("The fact is, Constantine has shot himself")—may find fewer echoes these days.

The only thing, it seems, that is missing from this aggiornamento is fresh language, so we're making a suggestion for the initial scene ("The Seagull" doesn't open until December 9, so there's still time for revisions):

The deck on Sorin's beach house. Masha and Medvedenko come in, left, clad in J. Crew separates.

MEDVEDENKO: Why do you wear licorice all the time?

MASHA: I'm in mourning for my life.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The Acting Company—A brief engagement by the group that John Houseman founded. Two of Shakespeare's plays will be presented. THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, directed by Charles Newell: Dec. 10 and Dec. 15. . . . ROMEO AND JULIET, directed by Leon Rubin: Dec. 12-13. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980.)

The American Plan—A new play by Richard Greenberg, with Joan Copeland, Yvette Hawkins, D. W. Moffett, Wendy Makkena, and Jonathan Walker. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

The Big Funk—A new play written and directed by John Patrick Shanley. Previews through Dec. 9. Opens Dec. 10 at 7:30. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Circle Repertory Company—Harry Kondoleon's LOVE DIATRIBE is the second in this season's series of five plays. Previews begin Dec. 5. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

I Stand Before You Naked—A new play by Joyce Carol Oates. Previews through Dec. 8. Opens Dec. 9 at 3. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Lambs Theatre Company—The seventh annual presentation of THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI, a musical adapted from two O. Henry stories. Opens Dec. 4 at 6:30, and runs through Dec. 30. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Love and Anger—A comedy by the Canadian playwright George F. Walker. Opens Dec. 4 at 8, and will run through Jan. 6. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200.)

Peter Pan—Cathy Rigby has the title role in a production of the 1954 musical; Stephen Hanan plays Captain Hook. Directed by Fran Soeder. Previews begin Dec. 11. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

Romeo and Juliet—Robert Sean Leonard and Gerit Quealy star in this Riverside Shakespeare Company production, directed by Charles Keating. In previews. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

The Seagull: The Hamptons: 1990—D. B. Sweeney and Carol Lynley in an adaptation of the Chekhov classic. Previews Dec. 5-8. Opens Dec. 9 at 5. (RAPP Arts Center, 220 E. 4th St. 279-4200.)

Township Fever—Mbongeni Ngema's new South African musical. In previews. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100.)

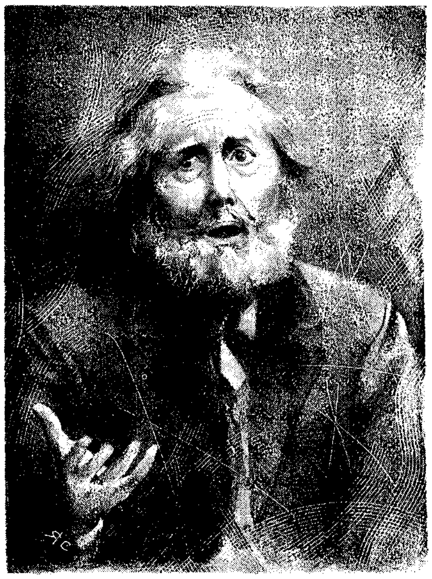
RECENTLY OPENED

Aspects of Love—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (11/19/90) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Camille, A Tearjerker—Everett Quinton and the late Charles Ludlam are both at their best in this revival of Mr. Ludlam's 1973 spoof, which gives Mr. Quinton a chance to "play the whore" on a grand scale. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

Carnal Knowledge—Jules Feiffer's play, which was made into the 1971 movie. With Justine Bateman, Jon Cryer, and Judd Nelson. Directed by Martin Charnin. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)



Brian Bedford in "The Lunatic, the Lover & the Poet"

The Caucasian Chalk Circle—Brecht's play, adapted by Thulani Davis from a translation by William Spiegelberger and directed by George C. Wolfe. With Charlayne Woodard, Reggie Montgomery, Novella Nelson, and Kevin Jackson, among others. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Daugherty & Field Off-Broadway—The cabaret team of Bill Daugherty and Robin Field in a revue of swing and show tunes. (Double Image Theatre, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120.)

Falsettoland—This latest installment of a three-part cantata by William Finn (music and lyrics) is a sequel to "In Trousers" and "March of the Falsettos." Mr. Finn's story presents a number of new elements (among them a Bar Mitzvah in the hospital room of a man who is dying of AIDS) before dissolving in its own syrup. The music sounds agreeable enough, and the performance goes smoothly under the direction of James Lapine. (Lu[illegible] Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Fiddler on the Roof—Topol heads the cast [illegible] revival of the 1964 musical by Joseph [illegible]n (book), Jerry Bock (score), and Sheldon Harnick (lyrics). Direction based on Jerome Robbins' original. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

Forever Plaid—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: Ibsen's WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN and Cocteau's INFERNAL MACHINE. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

King Lear—Hal Holbrook's King is a benign and rather merry monarch to start with, and he is shattered, with innocence destroyed, by one dreadful happening after another. It is an odd reading of the role, but Mr. Holbrook makes it credible. He does this almost unaided; only Ron Randell as Gloucester is fit company for him. (12/3/90) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes Dec. 16.)

Lake No Bottom—A new play by Michael Weller, with Daniel Davis, Robert Knepper, and Marsha Mason. Directed by Carole Rothman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Lettice & Lovage—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers, in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 23.)

The Lunatic, the Lover & the Poet—Brian Bedford's one-man Shakespeare show. (Mazur Theatre, 555 E. 90th St. 534-53[illegible]. Closes Dec. 16.)

Major Barbara—Shaw's comedy, directed by Anthony Cornish. With Robin Leslie Brown, Frank Geraci, Margaret Hilton, and Tom Bloom. (Pearl Theatre, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Dec. 8.)

The Miser—This tiresome, simpleminded, infantile revival of the Molière classic is an almost total washout saved from ignominy only by a dashing comic turn by John Christopher Jones. The director, Stephen Porter, would seem to have found for the divine Philip Bosco a part he can do nothing with. (10/29/90) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Monster in a Box—Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical monologue. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Nightingale—A play about Florence N. by Elizabeth Diggs. John Rubinstein directed. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Dec. 23.)

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Oh, Kay!—A joyous revival of a musical originally done here in 1926, this time with an all-black (all-gifted) company. The score, by George Gershwin, with lyrics by Ira Gershwin, and the singing and nimble dancing of the whole company are so glorious that they nearly compensate for the damnable din of amplification. With Brian Mitchell and Angela Teek as the romantic leads, and with fleet-footed Gregg Burge, Kevin Ramsey, and Stanley Wayne Mathis as the principal dancers. (11/12/90) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Piano Lesson—August Wilson's newest drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh, in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes. Lloyd Richards was the director. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Prelude to a Kiss—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Ashley Crow is the bride, and John Dossett is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

Remembrance—Aideen O'Kelly, Malachy McCourt, and John Finn in the New York première of a play by Graham Reid. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

The Rothschilds—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book). Lonny Price directed. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Shadowlands—William Nicholson's vulgar stage adaptation of the beautiful television film that he wrote for the BBC about C. S. Lewis is essentially a tourist trap. It Broadwayizes everything that, in the movie, was subtle or sincere. Directed by Elijah Moshinsky, with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Alexander. (11/26/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

Shogun: The Musical—Or "James Clavell's Shogun: The Musical," to give credit where credit is due, is a real hoot. It has a shipwreck sequence, a lightning effect, an entire number performed on a treadmill, a slow-motion sequence, a gunshot, an earthquake, a rainstorm, a snowstorm, a cavalry charge, a Ninja raid, a haiku competition, and a song about sex paraphernalia, and it begins with two half-naked men banging on drums. What more do you want? (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (6/25/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Smoke on the Mountain—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed; but cast and direction are both excellent, and Tony Goldwyn is electrifying as a young homosexual who wishes his father weren't quite so laid back about his homosexuality. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Telltale Hearts—A play by Joe Barnes. With Count Stovall and Elain Graham. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. Closes Dec. 9. For information about tickets, call 944-9870.)

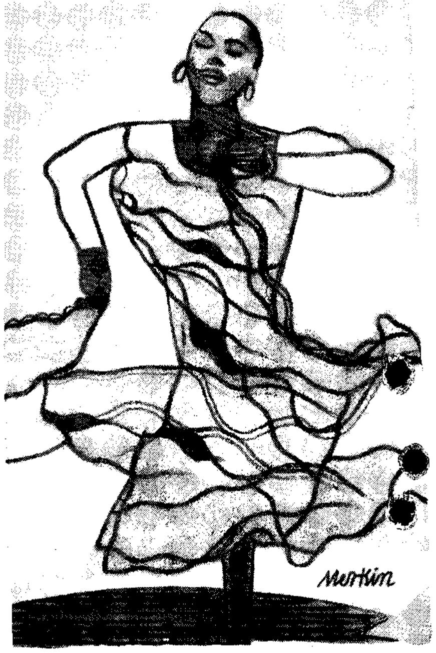
Those Were the Days—A Yiddish-English musical revue put together by Zalmen Mlotek and Moishe Rosenfeld. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302.)

Village Light Opera Group—Presenting a brief engagement of Gilbert and Sullivan's **iolanthe.** (Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 9.)

Villagers—A play written by John Francis Istel and directed by Bonnie Mark. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 16.)

LONG RUNS

black and blue: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while La Vern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **city of angels:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular setting and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirtieth birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **a few good men:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series. Directed by Don Scardino. With Pamela Blair and Bradley Whitford. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **forbidden broadway 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **grand hotel:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. With David Carroll as the Baron. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **gypsy:** This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). With Linda Lavin. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.) . . . **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **other people's money:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **the phantom of the opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



Judith Jamison, director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre

DANCE

THE poster for the charming show at the Big Apple Circus depicts a young girl in a dancing gown, poised in arabesque on the bare back of a horse. The scene refers to this year's Big Apple theme, "Ballerinas, Horses, and Clowns . . . The Golden Age." For it happens that the fin-de-siècle period that produced Degas (the poster's inspiration), and other individuals of vision who saw theatrical dancing as a code language of the spirit, was also the great period of the European circus: a time of daring acrobats, sculptured equestriennes, and very distinguished clowns. The Big Apple Circus (Damrosch Park; through Jan. 6) has thoughtfully tried to evoke them all.

In the past few years, New York has played host to several touring productions that have isolated this or that aspect of the Golden Age circus experience. Siegfried & Roy brought their illusions and white tigers; Le Cirque du Soleil consisted exclusively of postmodern acrobats and clowns. But in making the focus tighter these groups also seemed to impoverish the texture of their presentations. If you love the circus, as we do, you don't want to see only the aerialists, or the pie throwing, or the pure mimicry of trained beasts. You want the full range, in rings, forever connected by sawdust, popcorn, and musical time. The Big Apple Circus can be stagy and self-conscious, but it has always understood this basic desire of its audience. It knows that the first entrée of the first animal is the singlemost mysterious moment of the show, and that if one wants to really stimulate a spectator's feelings one must play with families of scale (adult and baby elephants ridden by adults and children), or with the interpenetration of art forms (a ballerina performing sautés on horseback), or with sweeping

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DANCE–*Cont'd*

links between earth and air. In this year's edition, there is a moment where a girl seems to spiral in thin air as, sixteen feet below, a steed—unsaddled, riderless—canters about the ring. The two creatures are actually connected by the wires of a "horse-propelled trapeze," but the imaginative connections defy naming: it is, in every sense, a Romantic machine. We tried to place the image in ballet history, and decided that it fell somewhere between the "Giselle" of 1841 and the "Mozartiana" of 1933—another sort of golden age.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Performances of "The Nutcracker" are being presented through Jan. 6. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Dec. 6-7 at 8; Dec. 8 at 2 and 8; Dec. 9 at 1 and 5; and Dec. 11-12 at 6. The season will continue through Feb. 24.)

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE—Opening performances of a four-week engagement that will run through Dec. 30. Dec. 5 at 7:30: "Read Matthew 11:28" (company première), "Episodes," "North Star" (company première), and "Revelations." (A benefit performance for the company.) . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 8: "Landscape," "Episodes," and "The Stack-Up." . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 8: "Night Creature," "Treading," "Hidden Rites," "Suite Otis," and "Read Matthew 11:28." . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 2: "Streams," "Treading," "Reflections in D," "North Star," and "Memoria." . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 8: "Night Creature," "Hermit Songs," "Episodes," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 3: "Blues Suite," "Reflections in D," "Hidden Rites," and "Memoria." . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 8: "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot," "North Star," "Suite Otis," and "Read Matthew 11:28." . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 8: "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot," "Forgotten Time" (company première), and "The Stack-Up." . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 8: "Hidden Rites," "Masekela Langage," and "Revelations." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

BALLET HISPANICO—Tina Ramirez's group presenting new pieces by Graciela Daniele and George Faison, among other works. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 4-7 at 8, Dec. 8 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 9 at 2 and 7:30.)

EKATHRINA SOBECHANSKAYA AND HER ORIGINAL TROCKADERO GLOXINIA BALLET COMPANY—In a five-night engagement. "Russian Snowflakes," "Les Bijoux," "An Olde Russian Fairytale," and a new solo for Madame Sobechanskaya (a.k.a. Larry Ree) are all on the bill. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Dec. 5-9 at 7:30.)

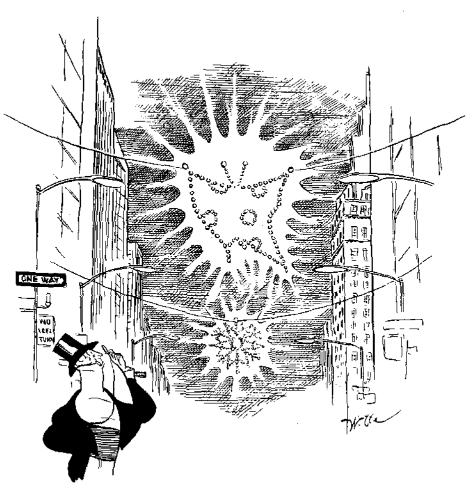
PHYLLIS LAMHUT DANCE COMPANY—In the premières of "Cavatina" and "Cleave" and a revival of "Finale." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Dec. 6-7 at 8:30 and Dec. 8-9 at 7 and 9. For reservations, call 529-2318.)

YVES MUSARD—With his company, VAdancers, in "Solid Air," a new, hour-long work. (Dia Art Foundation, 155 Mercer St. Dec. 8-9 at 8. Tickets at the door on the nights of the performances.)

PILOBOLUS—Opening performances of a four-week engagement that will run through Jan. 6. Dec. 11 at 8: "The Particle Zoo" (New York première), "Moonblind," "Televisitation," and "Debut C." . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 8: "Ciona," "Axones" (New York première), "Shizen," solo from "The Empty Suitor," and "Land's Edge." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

NIGHT LIFE

EVERYONE knows how to get to Carnegie Hall, but how do you get to CBGB? The answer is: audition. Every Sunday and Monday evening, the club holds Audition Nights, during which bands of every persuasion perform for their peers, the club's bookers, and a handful of innocent bystanders. There's no giant hook and no gong, and the music's far too loud for anyone to be heard yelling "Next!," so from the bystander's point of view the evening is a dubious proposition. But for the bands, some of which make a pilgrimage here from distant cities, this is an occasion as significant—and nerve-racking—as a first piano recital. On a recent Sunday night, there was a constant flow of musicians carrying their instruments from the street to the backstage area. One group consulted with friends who had brought some fancy video equipment; another huddled over their set list at a nearby table. We sat through several sets: a peevish art-rock-noise band, whose lead singer produced barking-dog noises from a Casio mini-keyboard; an earnest trio who appeared to have listened to too many Steely Dan records; and a hard-rock group that featured an odd pairing: the singer/bassist was a bearish, leather-gloved guy whom we'd definitely want on our team in a bar brawl, while the guitarist, who played showy, Van Halen-eat-my-dust leads, had the beard, sports jacket, and extra baggage of an aging British rock star. The most promising band of the evening was a rockabilly outfit from Chicago: an assortment of not-ready-for-prime-time Fonzies, complete with D.A.s, tattoos, and greaser apparel. Taking the stage, they were all business, but they were soon done in by an inattentive sound man. Although they sported some very sharp vintage guitars, all you could hear was the saxophonist, who never came up for air, and the piano player, a bespectacled, clean-cut Asian guy who looked as if he must have been kidnapped.



(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**SUSANNAH MC CORKLE,** a tall, blond, silky-voiced singer and musical scholar (she's known for unearthing forgotten tunes, some of them with Portuguese lyrics), is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Shows at nine-fifteen Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of Serrano hams hangs over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. The **MANHATTAN RHYTHM KINGS,** a tap-dancing, harmonizing trio that concentrates on the old-timey stuff, begin a run on Dec. 4. Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven, and Sundays at three.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. Trumpet virtuoso **FREDDIE HUBBARD'S** band holds sway Dec. 4-9. **BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS,** featuring David Clayton-Thomas, begins an engagement on Dec. 11. First set at nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. If you end up without a seat, you can stand at the bar—finally a club where they don't force you to drink—and mull over photographs from great shows you've missed. There's a songwriters convocation on Dec. 6, featuring **PAT DINIZIO** (of the Smithereens), **GRAHAM PARKER,** and **JIMMY WEBB.** Dec. 7-8 belongs to the pompadoured lounge lizard and cutup **BUSTER POINDEXTER,** along with the **BANSHEES OF BLUE.** Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. The piano-bass team of **MULGREW MILLER** and **IRA COLEMAN** stops in Dec. 3-8; saxophonist **BOBBY WATSON,** one of the late Art Blakey's better-known protégés, works with pianist **JOHN HICKS** and bassist **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE** starting Dec. 10. Music begins at around nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, three walls of Vertès murals, and perennial favorite **BOBBY SHORT.** Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CAT CLUB, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by metalheads, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glides across the floor at an easy pace; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS** dig into some prewar stuff on Dec. 9. Music from eight to midnight.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave (graffiti-covered walls, a battered pool table, rest rooms for the intrepid only) was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene—Blondie, Talking Heads, the Ramones, and Television were regular attractions. Other clubs of the era have fizzled, but CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. Music runs from nine-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from ten-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A snug, candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. **FRANK MORGAN,** who's on hand Dec. 4-9 (with **GEORGE CABLES**), is an alto saxophonist whose first, Charlie Parker-struck album came out in 1955. He didn't get around to making his second until 1986, but that recording shows his love of bop to be undiminished. **CAROL SLOANE** and her trio commence on Dec. 11. Music after ten.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls. On peak nights there's a "take no prisoners" atmosphere. Show times are Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays at midnight, and Saturdays at eleven.

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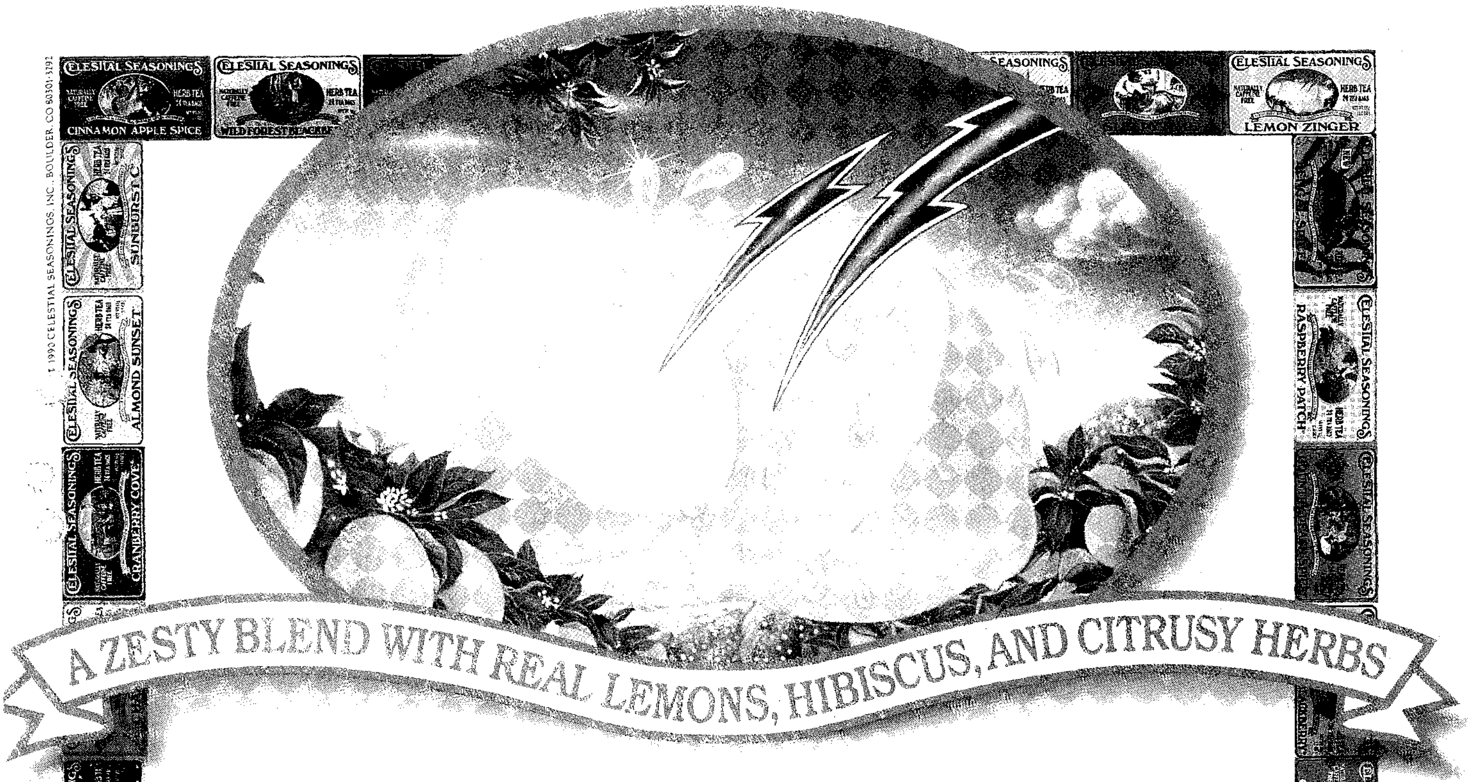
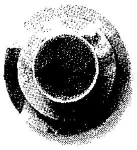

A ZESTY BLEND WITH REAL LEMONS, HIBISCUS, AND CITRUSY HERBS



The day had started with a **BANG** that made me *whimper* so I poured a steaming lemon sweet cup and sipped and slipped away to the days when I'd worn **Birkenstocks** instead of BALLYS, when lunch was something you **HAD** rather than something you **DID**, and then, as that *Hot* honey sweetened cup reached Lemon Zinger perfection and its tangy steam rushed up to warm my face, I wondered how I'd gone from being called a hippie to a YUPPIE and if maybe someday I could become something that didn't end in "ie." But, hey, I'd figure that one out over another cup of tea.

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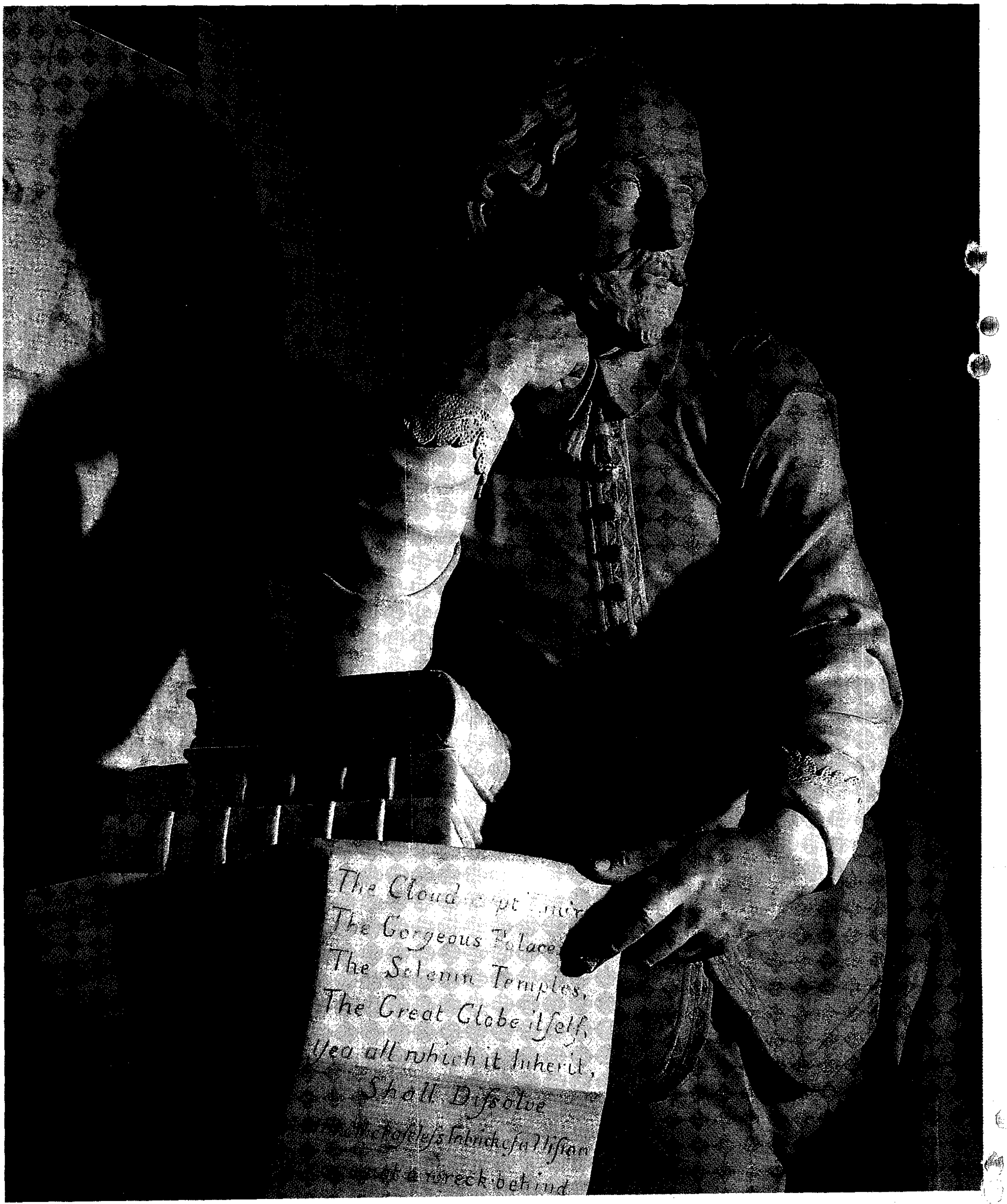
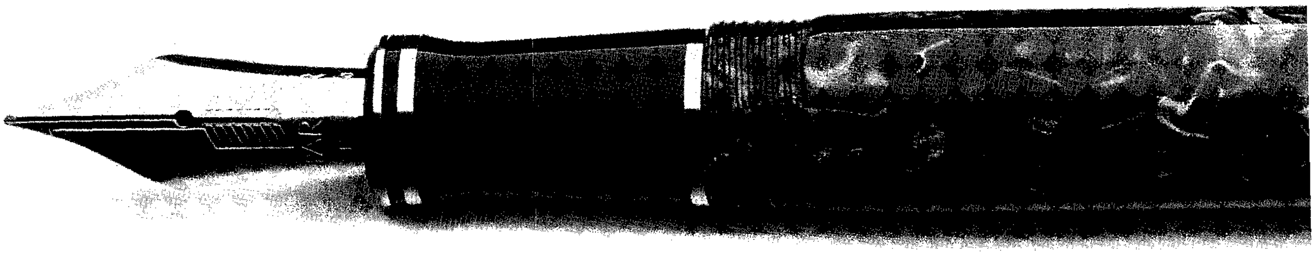

The Cloud-capt Tow
The Gorgeous Palace
The Solemn Temples,
The Great Globe itſelf,
Yea all which it Inherit,
Shall Diſsolve
the baſeless Fabrick of a Viſion
a wreck behind



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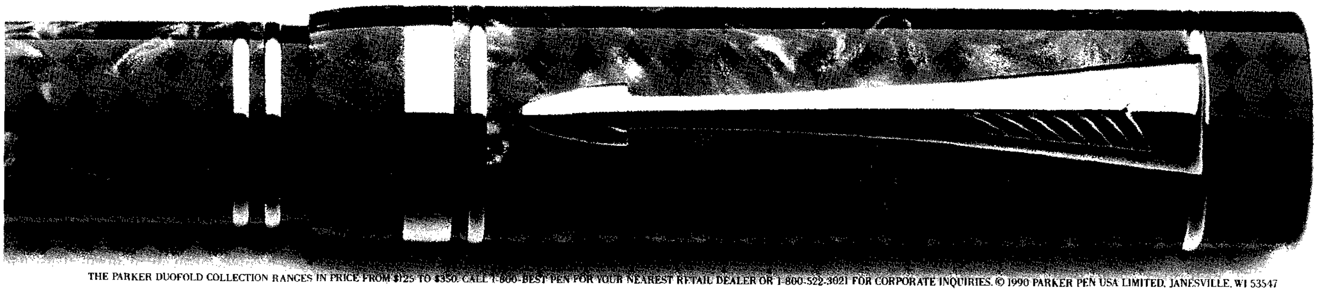

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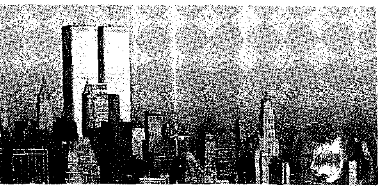

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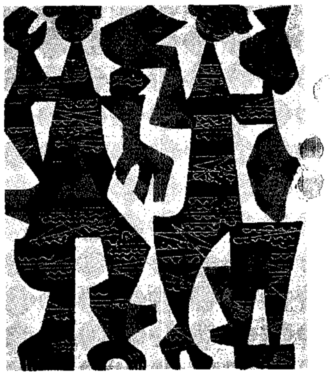

Carlos Merida
Silhouettes, 1951
IBM Gallery of Science and Art

Mexico
A work of art

DELTA 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A tin-roofed, hubcap-awninged, soul-food-serving, chicken-shack theme bar. Exhibits include a rusted Orange Crush sign, a Pat Boone record jacket, bottle caps spelling out "Welcome," and other peckerwood flotsam. (If this place weren't a restaurant, it could be a flea market.) The clientele is mainly Northern urban. There's live music most nights, including gospel on Mondays and zydeco on Thursdays. Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which [illegible]eached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. **SCOTT [illegible]MILTON,** a Providence-bred saxophonist whose big, breathy sound has led some listeners to believe they were hearing the ghost of swing-era great Ben Webster, guides his quintet Dec. 4-9. The commanding pianist **TOMMY FLANAGAN** brings in his trio on Dec. 11, for six nights. On Mondays, you can catch guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leading a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of businessmen and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a Steinway grand, which belongs to the rollicking, barrelhouse pianist **DOROTHY DONEGAN** for the next couple of weeks (with bassist **JON BURR**). Aside from a virtuosic technique, which reflects both her classical training and her days as a protégée of Art Tatum, Ms. Donegan grabs an audience's attention with vaudevillian antics that have been the trademark of her fifty-year career: stomping her feet, rolling her head, impersonating jazz divas, and generally raising cain. Guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **HARVIE SWARTZ** perform on Dec. 10. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark-wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass-figurine lamps. The musicians gather around the Steinway that sits in the dining room, but chin music is often the dominant sound. Pianist **BILL MAYS** and bassist **RAY DRUMMOND** work out Dec. 5-8; pianist **JOHN BUNCH** and bassist **STEVE LA SPINA** get started on Dec. 12. Music from nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. Empty Suits, featuring drummer-composer **BOBBY PREVITE, ROBIN EUBANKS,** and others, performs on Dec. 7. The **LEMONHEADS** claim Dec. 8. Dec. 12 belongs to Framework, a trio consisting of Laura Seaton, violin; Erik Friedlander, cello; and Kevin Norton, drums. Music after nine.

L[illegible]E STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-[illegible]950)—A Texan hangout where good old boys and Southern sorority girls mix with urban cowboys and those just looking. "Roadhouse" is an accurate description: it's a checked-tablecloth, long-necked-Bud, side-of-beef kind of place. The **BAND,** who apparently have not had their last waltz, will be here Dec. 4-5; the veteran jazz, blues, and rockabilly singer **DELBERT MC CLINTON** takes charge on Dec. 8; and **DR. JOHN** begins a two-night visit on Dec. 12. Music after nine. Dining.

LUDLOW STREET CAFÉ, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest below-stairs room that looks like a slightly spruced-up tenement-building apartment. There's cheap Ecuadoran food, a Greater East Village crowd, and, every Monday night, **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mix of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities. Sets at ten-fifteen Mondays and at eleven on other nights.

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A small-pond club for big-fish bands. There's not much here to look at: it's a back-room affair with a dingy stage and a baby grand someone apparently tried to cover with papier-mâché. Still, the bookers know their college-radio playlists. **STRANGE CAVE,** ex-Bongo James Mastro's lyrical, string-enhanced pop-rock band, performs on Dec. 8. **EXENE CERVENKA,** L.A.'s onetime Cleopatra of punk (she was a co-leader of the seminal band X), headlines on Dec. 9.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A great, pricey cabaret in the sky. **LORNA LUFT** is currently in residence. Her shows usually include some cabaret standards, some more contemporary stuff, and some wistful, there's-no-business-like-show-business stories. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio, Tuesdays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** Wednesdays to Stan Rubin's band, Fridays to Rick Hardeman and His Basin Street Six, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—A rock establishment where the customer is not always right. If you're willing to endure proof-of-drinking-age wristbands, primitive notions of crowd control, and a staff of "I breaka you face" security people, you can usually find some worthwhile bands. **AZTEC CAMERA,** which is slated for Dec. 6, is a revolving-door concern led by Roddy Frame, a Glaswegian guitarist, singer, and songwriter who has been turning out gentle, often intriguing pop for the better part of a decade. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

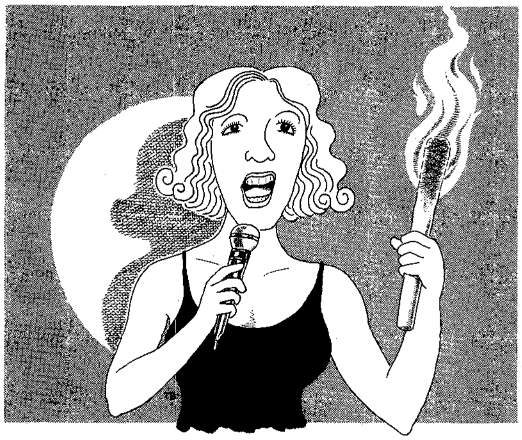
Spo-dee-o-dee, 565 W. 23rd St., at Eleventh Ave. (206-1990)—A night club in a part of Chelsea the real-estate agents don't show you. It's a modest-sized space, with room to dance, a stage that's occupied most nights, and a décor that includes Victorian-style chandeliers, movie-theatre drapes, and murals of Cotton Club-era dancers. At peak hours (late), you'll get an eyeful of waves, teased and sprayed locks, lip gloss, pumps, fishnets, fringed jackets, leather pants, and designer-outlet New Wave apparel.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. **ABDULLAH IBRAHIM AND EKAYA** are the current attraction. Mr. Ibrahim is a South African-born flutist, saxophonist, pianist, and composer equally swayed by Monk, Ellington, gospel, and African rhythms. His arrangements rely on wide-ranging melody lines that are traced by complex, polyphonic clusters—wind-and-brass chords that climb and swoop—and leave plenty of room for his accomplished soloists. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter Miles Evans is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that's like an urban Disneyland (Chelsea Billiards, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is a lot bigger and a lot slicker than the old Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. Chris Kelly and the Tailgaters share the bill on Dec. 6; Bobby King and Terry Evans trade off on Dec. 8.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." Trumpeter and flugelhornist **RED RODNEY,** who spent the late forties hangin' and slangin' with Charlie Parker, and who fell out of circulation for a long time before roaring back in the late seventies, brings in a quintet Dec. 4-9. The **JACKIE MC LEAN** quartet gets under way on Dec. 11. A big band formerly led by the late Mel Lewis holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

Wonderland, 519 2nd Ave., at 29th St. (213-5098)—When you're hungry for the blues, or just plain hungry. In the mid-forties, as the leader of an influential big band, **BILLY ECKSTINE** was the Gertrude Stein of bebop, with a salon comprising a small army of soon-to-be stars. In 1947, Eckstine dissolved the group to concentrate on his singing career, which has been holding steady ever since. His sensuous, rumbling bass-baritone, one of the most distinctive voices in jazz, will be heard here Dec. 7-9. **DIZZY GILLESPIE** begins a three-night stand on Dec. 11. Show times are Wednesdays and Thursdays at nine and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine, eleven, and one. Dining.



Susannah McCorkle at the Algonquin

Woody's, 82 E. 4th St. (982-3686)—Rolling Stones guitarist Ron Wood's club is a black-painted basement with mirrors, rotating spotlights, and enough sofas to rival Jennifer Convertibles. Stones memorabilia, with an emphasis on Ronnie himself, provide the primary decoration. The **DARLING BUDS,** who perform on Dec. 5, are a young, on-the-rise Welsh band who march in step with the prevailing British-pop Zeitgeist: pleasing melodies, urgent guitars, and a passion for all things psychedelic. Shows Wednesdays through Saturdays, from about eleven.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. Pianist **JANE JARVIS** works with bassist **FRANK TATE** through Dec. 8; pianist **ROGER KELLAWAY** and bassist **JAY LEONHART** perform on Dec. 9; and Ms. Jarvis and cornettist **WARREN VACHÉ** kick off on Dec. 10. Music weeknights from eight, and Sundays from seven.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

RULE of thumb for having a good turnout: offer free admission.

Rule of thumb for having a great turnout: offer open bar.

Rule of thumb for having a mob scene: offer free food.

Having been promised all three, the growling stomachs eager for sustenance at the opening of the Big City Diner (43rd Street and Eleventh Avenue) and the celebration for Kelly Cutrone at Limelight could have drowned out the largest Bar Mitzvah at the Huntington Town House, band included.

Big City's was the more civilized, if not the better-dressed, affair. A little cleaner, a little brighter, and now boasting video screens playing James Bond movies, and, in its aptly named Unisphere Room, a resplendently tacky version of the '64-65 World's Fair symbol, the near-landmark still retains the Formica-ed charm of the Market Diner, the building's former occupant. Even some of the waitresses are holdovers. Their expressions, however, were new, especially as they viewed designer Zang Toi's entourage of rushed and ruffled Asian beauties; one of Susanne Bartsch's customary evening ensembles; Anita Sarko's fresh white snowflake tattoo ("Very progressive," cooed a friend); and the usual unusual assortment of the undraped yet overdressed. "These are your new regulars," giggled a silver-pageboyed honey in a polyurethane vest to a lady behind the counter, who probably began pushing plates the year Eve Arden graduated from high school. "You mean irregula[illegible]" she fired back.

You wouldn't think all those people at Big City would have been able to swallow and get to Limelight in time to eat all over again. Yet there they were, in the club's upstairs library, piling on the salad as if it were seasoned with diamond chips. While searching for the birthday girl, we were accosted by Sylvia Miles, who complained, "No one writes anything nice about me, and I've never said a bad thing about anyone in my life." Sylvia was sporting her new hat. "I bought it at Chuckles and sewed a Bergdorf label into it." She looked nice. (O.K., your run of bad press is over.)

Two days later, we went to the Big City Diner for breakfast, just to see how it looked in the light—like the old Market Diner, hosed down. The only difference was the video screens—still playing those Bond films. "I'm sick of them," said the cashier. "CNN is more exciting. Or they should play something unique that New Yorkers can identify with." How about a Sylvia Miles Film Festival?

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Next Wave Festival—Final performances. Susan Marshall & Company in a new full-length work with a score by Pauline Oliveros. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Dec. 4-8 at 8 and Dec. 9 at 3.)

Big Apple Circus—Performances under the little big top run through Jan. 6 in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park. For ticket and schedule information, call 268-3030.

"The Christmas Spectacular"—Radio City Music Hall's annual Yuletide dancearama—with the Rockettes, of course—runs through Jan. 3. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

Stephen Holman—In "Self-Obliteration of Human Form," a performance piece billed as "psychological vaudeville." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Dec. 6[illegible] at 8:30.)

Bina Sharif—In an evening of monologues. (P[illegible] 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-528[illegible]. Dec. 6-9 at 9:30. Through Dec. 16.)

David Cale and Frank Maya—In workshop performances of new stories and monologues. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Dec. 6-8 at 10.)

Ken Jacobs—In "Two Wrenching Departures," a performance piece that incorporates film. (Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. Dec. 9 at 2. No charge beyond museum admission.)

Karen Finley—Talking about why she does what she does. (Juilliard School, 144 W. 66th St. 877-1800, ext. 633. Dec. 12 at 6.)

Benefit—Allen Ginsberg, Philip Glass, Garrison Keillor, Ned Rorem, Fran Lebowitz, and others in an evening to raise money for writers and editors with AIDS. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Dec. 5 at 8.)

If you're looking for lean, you're in Luck.

I'd like to tell you a juicy story. A story everyone in Luck, Wisconsin knows. It's about herb marinated beef steak. It's about braised steak provençal and broiled steaks with company potatoes. But most of all, it's about good fortune. Because many cuts of beef are surprisingly low in calories. Lower than most people think. A lean, trimmed three-ounce serving averages less than 200 calories. Top round, for example, hardly tops 153 calories. That's an inspiration to anyone holding a menu. Or following a diet. You know, according to legend, the town of Luck was named by Dan Smith, an early logger. Having faced much adversity in life, he solved the problem by always being "in Luck." Today, our luck is still pretty good —delicious, in fact. Where would we be without beef? Out of luck, I'd say. See you in the next town.

THE SKINNIEST SIX

ROUND TIP [illegible] *calories*
5.9 gms total fat (2.1 gms sat. fat)*

TOP ROUND [illegible] *calories*
4.2 gms total fat (1.4 gms sat. fat)*

TOP LOIN 176 *calories*
8.0 gms total fat (3.1 gms sat. fat)*

EYE OF ROUND 143 *calories*
4.2 gms total fat (1.5 gms sat. fat)*

TENDERLOIN 179 *calories*
8.5 gms total fat (3.2 gms sat. fat)*

TOP SIRLOIN 165 *calories*
6.1 gms total fat (2.4 gms sat. fat)*

Beef.
Real food for real people.

**Sources: USDA Handbook 8-13 1990 Rev., U.S. RDA National Research Council 1989, 10th Edition. Figures are for a cooked and trimmed 3 oz. serving. 4 oz. uncooked yield 3 oz. cooked. For a beef recipe booklet, write the B.I.C., Dept. T, 444 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Please enclose 50¢. ©1990 Beef Industry Council and Beef Board.*

ART

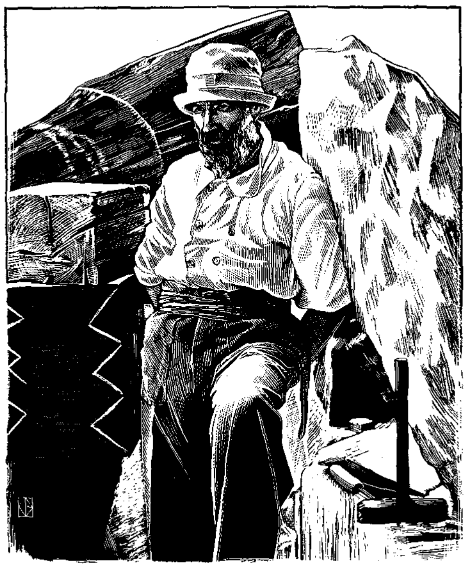
OVER the past six or seven years, David McDermott and Peter McGough have become the art world's most visibly eccentric presences since the onset of James Lee Byars. With their mid-Victorian garb, their Model T Ford, their studio in an eighteen-sixties bank building in downtown Williamsburg (Brooklyn), and their retinue, normally of tense, wing-collared young men, these singular fellows have firmly established themselves as anachronists *extraordinaires*. Their current show (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene Street; through January 5) includes a number of entertainingly historical puns and *gestes*—a group of boxed and labelled bits of broken crockery, for instance, titled "San Francisco Earthquake Souvenirs. 1906," and a large painting titled "27, Rue de Fleurus. 1915," in which Gertrude Stein's famous Paris address and one of her even more famous Picassos have, as if by wishful thinking, been transposed to the gentlemen's very own studio walls.

The nature of the variously back-dated McDermott & McGough œuvre, however, is not merely a matter of historicist wit, eclecticism, or nostalgia. It also expresses a world view that encompasses God and man—very literally and very exclusively, as a matter of fact. The posture of a quirky and provincial sort of neo-Platonism involving rapt boy-love, strict vegetarianism, and a homespun, self-helpish, and vaguely millenarian style of Christianity sometimes referred to as "divine mind," has long colored their work, sometimes to engaging and radical effect. A Pre-Raphaelite allegory in the show titled "Love Talking to Boys. 1865," in which a group of madly Romantic ephebes are in the thrall of a wingèd youth, is one such charmingly uncompromised work. But at other times we are of a troubled and divided mind when it comes to the Messrs. McDermott & McGough. We start to get nervous at the prospect of "Mental Photography. 1898," a suite of tiny paintings of churchy mottoes, because we like to think we're devoutly cosmopolitan. Faced with a painting such as "Chart 5. 1904," a phrenological portrait of a one-track mind, bearing the unambiguous legend "He loved boys, artists and aristocrats," we start to feel pointedly unloved, even segregated.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries" includes four hundred works of art from the pre-Columbian era through 1950. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ "Théâtre de la Mode," in the Costume Institute, is a re-creation of a 1945 fashion exhibition that raised money for French war relief. Due to a fabric shortage, the couture, by such designers as Balenciaga, Lanvin, and Worth, was presented in miniature, on thirty-inch wire mannequins with ceramic heads. A hundred and seventy of the original dolls have been restored for this show. . . . ¶ A new skylit sculpture court has opened on the main floor, and is home to several large French and Italian works from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, including Sarrazin's "Leda and the Swan" and Rodin's "The Burghers of Calais." . . . ¶ The recently acquired "Evening: Landscape with Aqueduct" by Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) is the focus of a small exhibition of his landscapes and related works. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ Fifteen American quilts and coverlets, made between 1803 and 1930, are on view. Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ More than two hundred American portrait miniatures, most of them in watercolor on ivory, and none larger than six inches in size. Among the immortalized sitters are George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and Abraham Lincoln. Through Feb. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture" is divided into four themes (graffiti, caricature, comics, advertising) and includes more than two hundred and fifty works. Through Jan. 15. . . . ¶ A breakthrough show of works in various mediums by Kiki Smith, one of the contemporary scene's outstanding originals. Smith, who seems to mistrust slickness and packaging of all sorts, has often displayed an offhand approach to exhibitions. Funky as it may be, however, this installation delivers her quirky and white-hot sensibility at full strength. The artist, who has trained as an emergency medical technician, takes an inside-out view of the body, her characteristic subject, that is at once very intense and dispassionate to the point of perversity. Two of the more memorable pieces on view here are a site-specific floor sculpture consisting of much-larger-than-life-size lead-crystal spermatozoa, and an exquisitely fragile wall relief, made of what appear to be flayed paper skins, that gives a whole new meaning to the word "bodysuit." And once again Eva Hesse comes to mind. Through Jan. 1. . . . ¶ Twenty-one new photographs by Paul D'Amato, Carl Pope, and JoAnn Verburg. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ A video installation by Gary Hill, consisting of body images displayed through stripped cathode-ray tubes. Through Jan. 6. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)



Constantin Brancusi

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—An exhibition of thirty-seven black-and-white and color silk-screen paintings by Robert Rauschenberg that were executed between 1962 and 1964. Through March 17. . . . ¶ "Mind Over Matter" attempts to delineate a youngish "third generation of idea-oriented" artists—Liz Larner, Ronald Jones, Tishan Hsu, Nayland Blake, Ashley Bickerton, and Annette Lemieux. Their works move away from what in today's climate may seem like the indulgences of commodification to an interest in socially relevant issues. The effort is laudable, the installation exquisite, the selections often quite thoughtful—but the show is a mess. It circles around some potentially interesting thoughts without ever taking off, largely because of the mediocrity of the work. Through Jan. 6. . . . ¶ Several animal sculptures from the museum's collection are on view in the lobby, including works by Hunt Diederich, Elie Nadelman, Gaston Lachaise, and Alexander Calder. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A lobby installation by Joseph Kosuth, who has selected works from the museum's collection that at one time or another may have been deemed offensive. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixty paintings by Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917). Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Milton Avery in Black and White" is a display of eighty drawings in pencil, ink, and crayon, made by Avery between 1929 and 1959. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm and bamboo. Through Feb. 4. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—An annual exhibition of paintings, drawings, and prints. Among the fifty-six artists represented this year are Eric Fischl, Joan Nelson, Adrian Piper, Jane Dickson, and Theophilus Brown. Through Dec. 9. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Court Arts of Indonesia" is a meticulously selected and beautifully installed show, with just the right number of pieces to titillate but not overwhelm. Extraordinary detail abounds, especially in numerous ceremonial lances, which were symbolic expressions of power; very delicate gold jewelry; woven fabrics; and shadow puppets. There are also some curiosities, including a belt of human hair; a Japanese scroll depicting a royal procession, with a perspective that is part Eastern, part Western, and as wacky as Uccello; a golden skeleton; and a modesty plate, which is a kind of Indonesian fig leaf. Through Dec. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Visions of Home" is a display of ten prize-winning designs, along with forty other entries, for affordable housing at a specific seven-acre site in the South Bronx. The show is part of this fall's "Home: A Place in the World" series. Through Jan. 27. . . . ¶ Seventy prints produced by El Taller de Gráfica Popular, founded in 1937 in Mexico. The show is part of the series "Mexico: A Work of Art." Through Jan. 27. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"The Eccentric Painters of Yangzhou" presents thirty works by eleven innovative artists who lived in southern China in the eighteenth century. Through Dec. 15. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

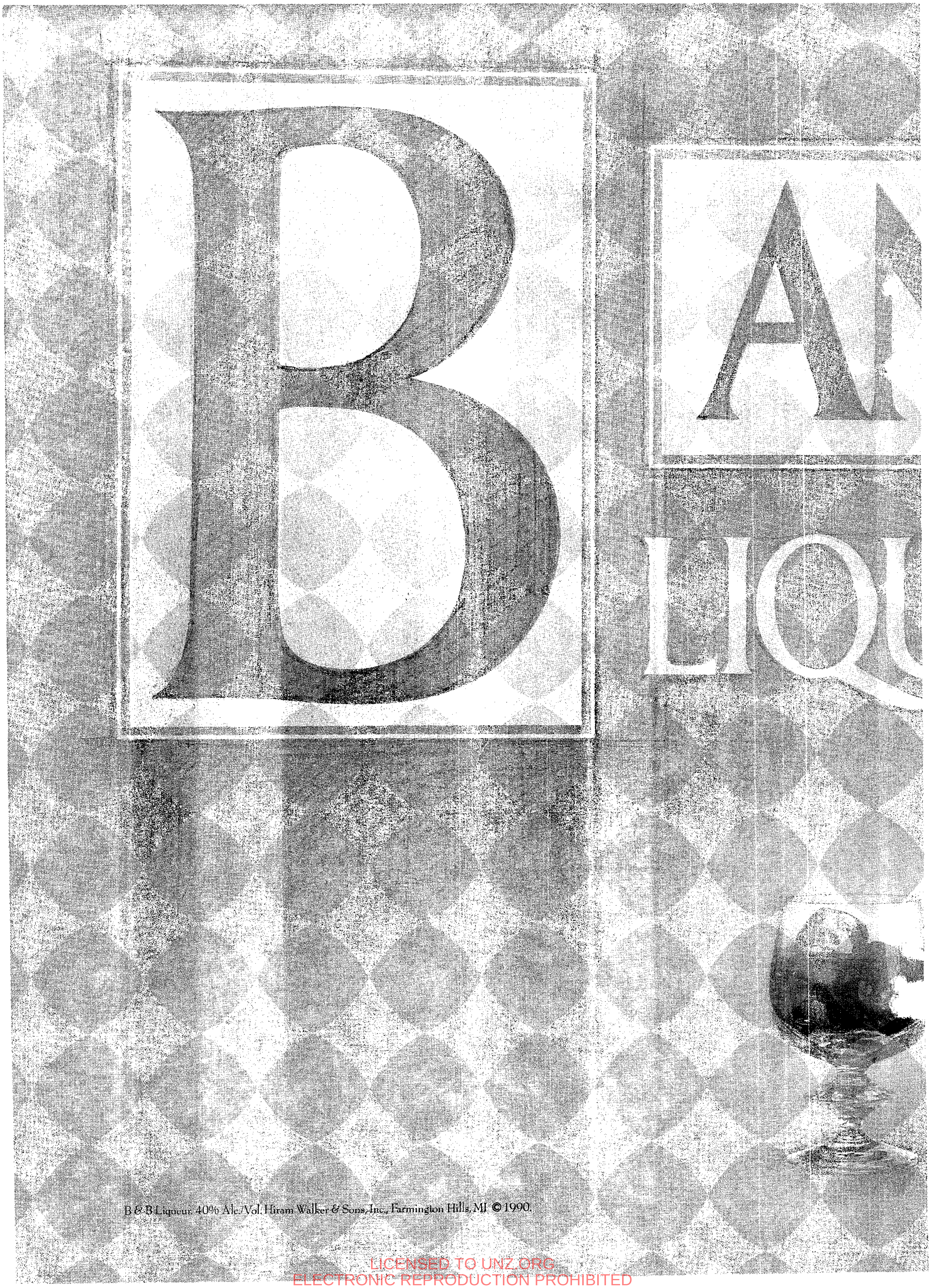
Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Scenic and architectural drawings by the eighteenth-century theatre designers and builders Francesco and Giovanni Carlo Bibiena. Through Dec. 30. . . . ¶ Two hundred pieces of elaborately worked gold jewelry spanning four thousand years of Grecian culture. From the Benaki Museum, in Athens. Through Jan. 13. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to [illegible]; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Be Merry & Wise" examines the development of children's books in England from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth. Among the many books, manuscripts, and drawings on view are the "History of Tom Thumbe" (1621, the first English folktale in print), Dorothy Kilner's "The Life and Perambulation of a Mouse" (1783), and the third edition of Edward Lear's "Book of Nonsense" (1861). Through Feb. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"The Cutting Edge" gathers together eighty-six works from the past thirty years for an examination of contemporary, and sometimes non-traditional, American folk art. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Through maps, paintings, photo-

Not surprisingly
the world's most romantic
love letters
come from France.



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Join television's longest-running anchor team on December 3, as MacNeil and Lehrer bring their trademark candor and depth to an intriguing new subject: MacNeil and Lehrer. Join special guests WALTER CRONKITE, PETER JENNINGS, JANE PAULEY, BARBARA WALTERS and others for a penetrating look at the news events that made history and the newsmen that made sense of it all, for 15 years.

Each weeknight, we've watched as MacNeil, Lehrer and their team examine the issues that affect our world, and fill in the details that touch our lives. And each year, since 1983, AT&T has been right there with them—bringing you their unique brand of broadcast journalism. On December 3, we'll be there, too—for the 15th anniversary special saluting the news team that opinion-leaders prefer, and the objectivity and insight that have informed every one of their broadcasts.

The MacNeil/Lehrer NEWSHOUR

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Monday, Dec. 3 on WNET/New York.
Check local listings.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

graphs, and prints, "Within Bohemia's Borders" documents the turbulent history of Greenwich Village from 1830 to 1930. Through Feb. 3. . . . ¶ Forty-five oil paintings by the hundred-year-old Theresa Bernstein, depicting the urban scene in New York City from 1914 to 1930. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and thirteen master drawings, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, by such artists as Poussin, Fragonard, Delacroix, and Cézanne. From the Louis-Antoine Prat collection, in Paris. Through Jan. 20. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"On Paper" examines the history of papermaking, from its invention in China through John Cage's edible paper. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Manuscript fragments, letters, first editions, photographs, and illustrations are all part of "Charles Dickens: His Life and Work." (Berg Collection. Open daily, except Sundays and Thursdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957)—Once again the Gagosian gallery has mounted a museum-quality show, this time of six early works (1904-09) by perhaps this century's most enigmatic sculptor. Two of these works have not been seen outside the artist's native Romania. One of the three earliest pieces, in bronze, is a bit unformed, but the centerpiece of the show is another matter. It is the first version of the artist's masterpiece, "The Kiss," a carving in stone that is a blissful merger of figuration and abstraction. Also of prime interest is an exquisite little 1909 marble carving titled "Trunk," which is a very sexy representation of a woman's torso. The piece is half innocent and half naughty; one side of the marble is as supple and smooth as adolescent skin, the other is unarticulated and raw. Through Dec. 15. (980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Short List—**GIORGIO DE CHIRICO,** Borghi, 26 E. 80th St. (through Jan. 15); **CONRAD MARCARELLI,** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. (through Dec. 15); **MARYAN,** Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through Dec. 22); **JOAN MITCHELL,** Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (through Dec. 15); **SIGMAR POLKE,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through Jan. 15); **BURT SILVERMAN,** Cudahy's, 170 E. 75th St. (through Dec. 8); **ANDREW WYETH,** Marcelle, 996 Madison Ave., at 77th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 15).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

David Hammons—In Thailand, elaborate "spirit houses" are constructed near the entrances to homes and businesses to give spirits their own dwelling places; in Central Africa, certain tribes drive iron stakes into human statues called "spirit catchers" in order to engage sympathetic magic. At the entrance to his current exhibition, the sharp-minded, ever-poetic, and virtually unsung Hammons has combined these two forms in a piece entitled "Spirit Catcher," which consists of a makeshift, mirrored basketball hoop surrounded by flickering candelabra arms. The sculpture, of fragile construction and indomitable spirit, is an invitation to viewers to leave their aggressions outside. The main event, in the larger gallery here, is an eloquent installation, titled "Who's Ice Is Colder?," that critiques the racial battles taking place in food stores in some of New York's black neighborhoods. It is a politically incisive and timeless musing on racial identity that answers its own troubling questions about African-Americans and their own thwarted empowerment. Through Dec. 28. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12			

Rebecca Horn—Like most of Horn's work, this new installation, titled "Amerika," is a hyper-cultivated, Dada-influenced comedy of the sexes. The larger exhibition room is occupied by four mechanical pieces, including a violin that seems to play for a moment before going limp, an umbrella-cum-pendulum with copper-pipe "snakes" that occasionally produce an electrical charge, and, best of all, a beat-up open suitcase, with what looks like a horse doctor's thermometer attached to its lining, that slides back and forth on a long, slack cable as if flapping its wings. Through Dec. 8. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**WARREN BRANDT,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 22); **TROY BRAUNTUCH,** Kent, 41 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 15); **WILLEM DE KOONING** and **JEAN DUBUFFET,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19); **JEAN DUBUFFET,** Urban, 500 Park Ave., at 59th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 22); **MINNIE EVANS,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 29); **MARY FRANK,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 28); **ROBERT INDIANA,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 31); **BILL JACKLIN,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 31); **WILLIAM KING,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 20); **ROBERT M. KULICKE,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through Dec. 22); **WIFREDO LAM,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 22); **GORDON MATTA-CLARK,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 15); **CLEMENT MEADMORE,** Heidenberg, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 15); **GEORGE NEGROPONTE,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 15); **KATSUHISA SAKAI,** Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 12); **EGON SCHIELE,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 12); **SEAN SCULLY,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Jan. 9); **RICHARD TUTTLE,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 12).

PIQUING

Each year, the holiday windows at Barneys New York get louder, funnier, and more capricious. This season, they're designed by Simon Doonan and filled with life-size mannequins (made by Martha King) that caricature celebrities from Martha Graham to Mikhail Gorbachev in settings that illustrate the subjects' larger-than-life obsessions. Tammy Faye Bakker appears in a pink boudoir with a giant upended-mascara-wand-cum-Christmas-tree and a mock TV set from which her husband smiles out at passersby—from behind bars. Giants linebacker Lawrence Taylor models an Astro-Turf uniform, and a newly liposuctioned Joan Rivers stands before a backdrop of her own holiday one-liners ("My idea of a stocking stuffer is Shelley Winters").

Since big egos fill big spaces, Madonna dominates the corner window at 16th Street, straddling her weight-lifting bench in a gold lamé corset (donated by the Material Girl herself). She's attended by a decidedly unholy stained-glass trinity: Warren Beatty, Sean Penn, and Sandra Bernhard. Madonna's Christmas tree, a four-foot-tall, perfectly coiffed dollop of blond wig hair, is a takeoff on the Dr. Seuss-style creation that swung from her head during the "Blond Ambition" tour.

With their toothy mouths and pasty complexions, Barneys' mannequins poke lighthearted fun at notorious nabobs, but there is one scathingly parodic Scrooge among them: Jesse Helms appears in his plaid bathrobe and Santa hat, having completed his "Naughty" list, which includes Teddy Kennedy, Andres Serrano, and Robert Mapplethorpe; Philip Morris and the N.R.A. are "Nice." Barneys' Christmas cheer runs out here: Helms' junk-constructed reindeer are named Bigotry, Homophobia, and Censorship.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Donald Baechler / Ford Beckman—Recent paintings, bronzes, and works on paper. Laconically naïve subjects couched in subtle, sophisticated, beautiful surfaces are this artist's stock-in-trade. Baechler has a marvellous sense of scale, and he is on to something interesting, if still rather inchoate. His images, whether in two or three dimensions, seem to exist suspended in a state of Proustian amnesia. It is as if there were madeleines to be found everywhere but no story. New or revived motifs in this good-looking exhibition include pine trees and playing cards. The former suggest an auspicious departure in the direction of landscape. The latter, although handsome and clever, are also a bit glib. / Pleasing but rather indifferent neo-minimalist paintings. Through Dec. 8. (Shafrazi, 130 Prince St.)

Jiří Georg Dokoupil—A show of funny little paintings, made with water, pear juice, or bananas, and depicting a row of spoons, a grid of bananas, a row of bottles, and a piece of string. The images look as if they were burned onto raw canvas, like solarized photographs, and manage to be both pranksterish and poignant. Through Dec. 26. (Kasmin, 580 Broadway.)

Eric Fischl—The artist displays great depth of feeling in this very interesting show of paintings inspired by a trip to India. The people and scenes seem as old as time; one picture seems infused with dust, another with singeing heat. Some of the figures in the paintings that depict groups of people are a bit wooden, as if the artist were timid about the subjects, but the paintings of solitary figures are most compelling. A picture of a holy man standing on his head, which is buried in sand, has an exquisite yellow background, and it demonstrates the profound maturity of the artist's technique. In other works, a thin young woman in a red-and-yellow sari forms a bright light framed by the grisaille of the temple statues on either side, and a veiled dancer performs inside a pea-green flame. Through Dec. 22. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Michael Goldberg—New canvases by an artist whose sensibility continues to affirm a faith in the restorative powers of painting. Whether the paint is thinly applied or caked on, these are vibrant, dynamic works. Through Dec. 21. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Keith Haring (1958-90)—Several sculptures consisting of the artist's best-known images—radiant children, barking dogs—in bright red, yellow, and blue. Sculpture was not Haring's forte, but two of these are so large that they become funny, in a mildly surreal way. They beg to be installed near a playground. Through Dec. 22. (Shafrazi, 163 Mercer St.)

Sean Landers—This artist deals with fame and ennui in a clever and amusing way. In the center of the gallery are clay sculptures displayed on Victorian stands, a milk crate, and a pair of spackle cans, and wrapped in plastic bags, as if they were in a perpetual state of unfinishedness or, perhaps, mounted under protest. They bear such titles as "Frugal Gourmet," "Irish Drunk," and "The Breast." The walls surrounding them are lined with "drawings" consisting of handwritten stories—by Landers' imaginary alter ego, Chris Hamson—about the artist's thwarted pursuit of fame and fortune, and about his tortured love life. The stories are extremely well written and convincing, drawing you in with their fictions every time. Through Dec. 22. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

John Miller—With the exception of two nicely done graphite drawings, everything here is coated in excretory brown—paintings embedded with junk; a hanging sphere covered

ART—Cont'd

with tiny mattresses, tires, and oil drums; and even a modern-day Echo and Narcissus, she in "fashionable" jogging wear, he, before his mirror, in a "republican" robe. Some pieces are references to other artists and seem to be part critique, part a deliberate display of envy—for example, a door and frame, covered in the usual shade of brown, that evokes Robert Gober. The only brownless work in the show, a statue, covered in 22k. golden-calf gold, of a couple in a lewd embrace, seems lifted from a recent Koons representation of himself and Cicciolina but also recalls the cheap zodiac statues that may have inspired the Koons piece. Through Dec. 15. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

AL TAYLOR—Very beautiful structures of Plexiglas and wood with rickety joints and spilled courses of paint. Also in the show are drawings, which belong to the Terry Winters school of smudged organic forms and communicate the same thing as the structures, but in a more economical way. Through Dec. 8. (Lorence-Monk, 578 Broadway.)

GROUP SHOWS—At **LOUVER,** 130 Prince St.: Paintings by Sabu Kohso that look like gouged linoleum or eroding brickwork; glass furniture by Vikky Alexander that seems to combine Scott Burton and Vito Acconci, without the strength of either; and pretentious constructions by Txomin Badiola that have to do with fifties furniture and spilt milk. There's an air of the unusual to this work, but it's forced. The most exotic aspect is the artists' names. Through Dec. 21. . . . **SONNABEND,** *420 West Broadway: Old works by Mel* Bochner, new works by Peter Halley, and a refreshing surprise: recent assemblages by Robert Rauschenberg. Made of battered urban metallica, these pieces are fluid, poetic, and assured. Through Dec. 22.

SHORT LIST—**SAM FRANCIS,** Foster Goldstrom, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 21); **GERTRUDE GLASS GREENE** and **BALCOMB GREENE,** Perlow, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 29); **ANTON HENNING,** Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Dec. 22); **MARILYN LERNER** and **JILL LEVINE,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Dec. 8); **ROBERT MASON,** Katzen, 475 Broome St. (through Dec. 31); **MARIO MERZ,** SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through Jan. 26); **CLAES OLDENBURG AND COOSJE VAN BRUGGEN,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Jan. 12); **LEO RABKIN,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through Jan. 5); **ROBERT WATTS,** Castelli, 578 Broadway (through Jan. 12).

PHOTOGRAPHY

WHEN Ilse Bing stopped taking pictures, in the fifties, it was photography's loss. Bing was good, her observations alive. Now, at the age of ninety-one, she's having an exhibition at the Min-Lowinsky gallery (584 Broadway; through December 29). The show, consisting of her collages from the past eleven years, is neither weighty nor consequential as far as photography goes. It offers another kind of treasure, though—work that's touching because of the way it comes from the heart, and tender because of the way Bing's hand gives new form to what once attracted her eye. Not easy to define, these collages are made up of bits and pieces of her photographs, as well as safety pins, colored glass, coins, wire, fragments of mirrors—materials that might have been thrown out but have instead been given an essential part to play. At first, these works seem too innocent to reveal very much. Bing's crafting of animals and people out of shells and coral, for example, initially looks like child's play. But be patient, and you'll be taken back to moments when even the most common stone could become a giant vessel to transport your dreams and emotions. In her recent work, Bing reminds us that photography can be used as just one piece of a puzzle.

NEW PHOTOGRAPHY AT MOMA—There is not a speck of glamour to be found in this engaging exhibition of photographs by Carl Pope, Paul D'Amato, and JoAnn Verburg. Instead, there's fat, sweat, dirt, poverty, alienation, self-defense. None of the pictures try to woo the viewer. But D'Amato's photo of rosebushes covered in plastic is particularly haunting. It's a lyrical, beautiful image, breaking through the pessimism that characterizes the rest of the show. Through Jan. 8. (Museum of Modern Art.)

SHORT LIST—**ANSEL ADAMS,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through Feb. 3); **SID AVERY,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 8); **GEORGE PLATT LYNES** and **MITCHELL SYROP,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Dec. 22); **SHEILA METZNER,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Dec. 15); **ANDRES SERRANO,** Stux, 155 Spring St. (through Dec. 8).

MUSIC

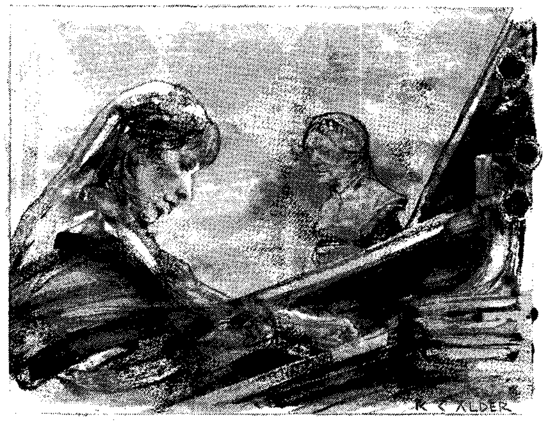
PUT any Beethoven piano sonata beside one of Schubert's, and they will talk to each other; play them, and they will talk to you about each other. Pierre Boulez, who has tried to force himself into inheriting their traditions, observed that "in German music, there is a continuity and development, such as in Beethoven and Wagner, that the French have rarely had." He might as well have named Schubert, and any other nationality besides the French. Especially after the great flowering of classical sonata structures in Vienna, compositions in the German tradition address issues proposed by other compositions, develop plans laid down by others, engage in technical, theoretical, and even philosophical dialogue with one another. Their inter-relationship is more complex than that posed by the strains of influence, reaction, and progress amply to be discerned in French, Italian, English, or Russian music. For this reason it has always been possible to build satisfying concert programs on a sequence of large German (that is, German or Austrian) works. Arthur Schnabel, Rudolf Serkin, and Alfred Brendel, among celebrated contributors to concert life, have kept steadily to this formula. Many others have emulated them. It is always interesting, as long as the player is manifestly and actively interested in the inner musical workings of the pieces. (Otherwise, it can be very boring. We have heard Vladimir Ashkenazy fail in a Schubert-Schumann program.)

Richard Goode is one of the pianists who, in our experience, always sounds interested. At Carnegie Hall, on December 10, he is to play Beethoven's Sonata Quasi una Fantasia, Op. 27, No. 1 (the brother of the once ubiquitous "Moonlight" Sonata), Schubert's A-Minor Sonata, D. 845, and the kaleidoscopic "Davidsbündlertänze" of Schumann ("Dances of David's Gang," one might call it—the Davidsbund was a fanciful group of idealistic hotheads allied against musical philistines).

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

CHRISTMAS MUSIC

THE TALLIS SCHOLARS—Peter Phillips directs the ten-member British vocal ensemble in Renaissance motets and a Palestrina mass. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. Dec. 4 at 8.)



Ruth Laredo plays Clara Schumann at the Metropolitan Museum

NEW YORK POPS—Skitch Henderson directing, *with the Dallas Symphony Chorus.* (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 7 at 8 and Dec. 8 at 2.)

BARNARD-COLUMBIA CHORUS—Gail Archer directs Bach's Cantatas Nos. 110 and 140, as well as a Handel organ concerto. With the St. Paul's Chapel Baroque Orchestra and soloists Barbara Shirvis (soprano), Mary Ann Hart (alto), Kevin Anderson (tenor), Wilbur Pauley (bass), and George Stauffer (organ). (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Dec. 7-8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evenings of the concerts.)

DESSOFF CHOIRS—Amy Kaiser directs a program that includes English music from the Renaissance to the present. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Dec. 7-8 at 8. For information about tickets, call 935-2551.)

CAROLLING—A sing-along directed by Judith Clurman, with chorus and soloists (including the folksinger Odetta). (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Dec. 8 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

AMERICAN BOYCHOIR—James Litton directing. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Dec. 9 at 4. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

VIENNA CHOIR BOYS—Stephan Aichinger directs a program of seasonal *Gemütlichkeit*, including "Old Vienna," a one-act operetta by the Austrian bandmaster Carl Michael Ziehrer. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 9 at 7:30.)

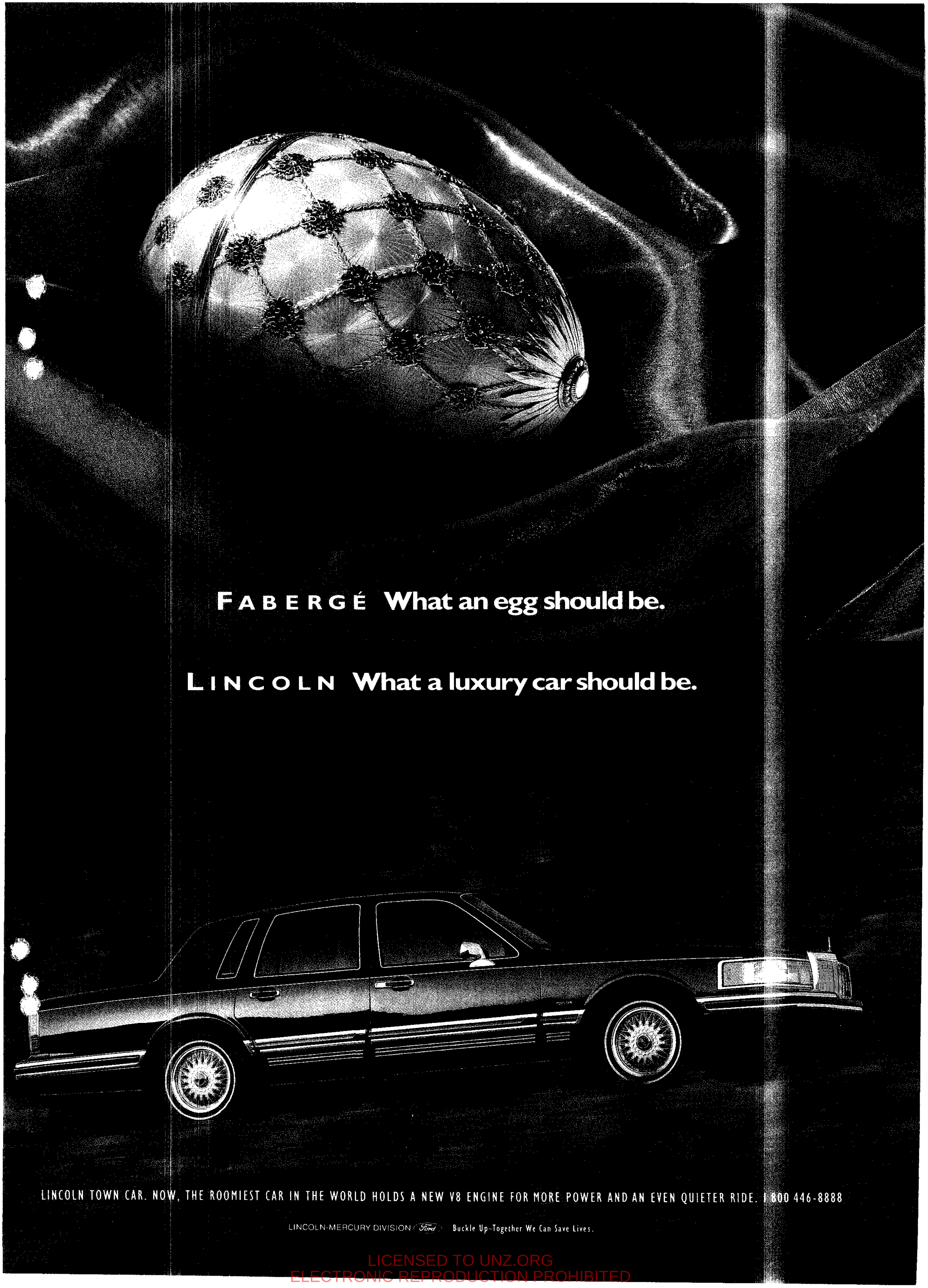
I CANTORI DI NEW YORK—Bart Folse directs a cappella music, including carols by Richard Pygott, motets by Bruckner and Poulenc, and Schoenberg's "Friede auf Erden." (Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 415 W. 59th St. Dec. 9 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

WESTERN WIND AND HESPERUS—The vocal sext[illegible] and early-music quartet focus on music fr[illegible] Spain and Latin America. (Weill Recit[illegible] Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Dec. 9 at 8:30.)

CANADIAN BRASS—The quintet teams up with the principal brass players from the New York Philharmonic, the Elmer Iseler Singers, and jazz trumpeter Jon Faddis. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 11 at 8.)

STONEWALL CHORALE—Works by Giovanni Gabrieli, Vivaldi, Britten, and John Rutter, directed by Bill Pflugradt. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 11 at 8.)

HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"—**HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY:** Christopher Hogwood directing the Boston-based group, using Mozart's orchestration. With a period-instrument orchestra, and soloists Nancy Argenta, soprano; Catherine Robbin, mezzo-soprano; David Gordon, tenor; and Cornelius Hauptman, bass-baritone. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 9 at 2:30.) . . . **RIVERSIDE CHURCH:** James Simms and Sherrill Milnes



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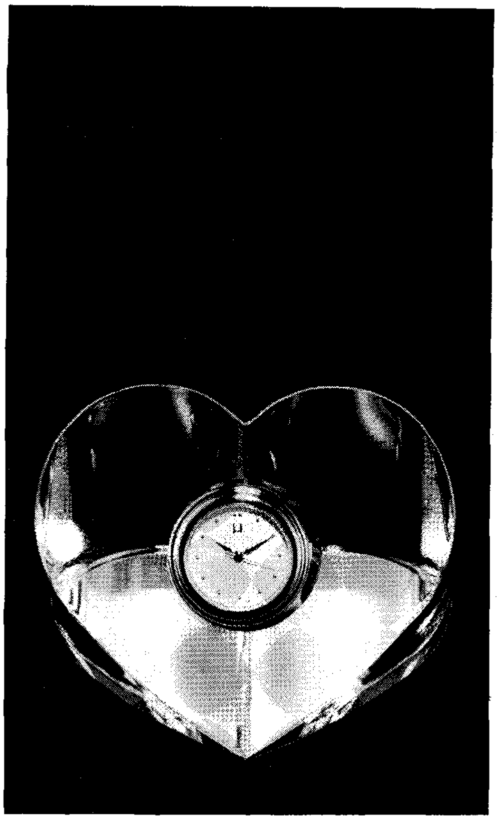

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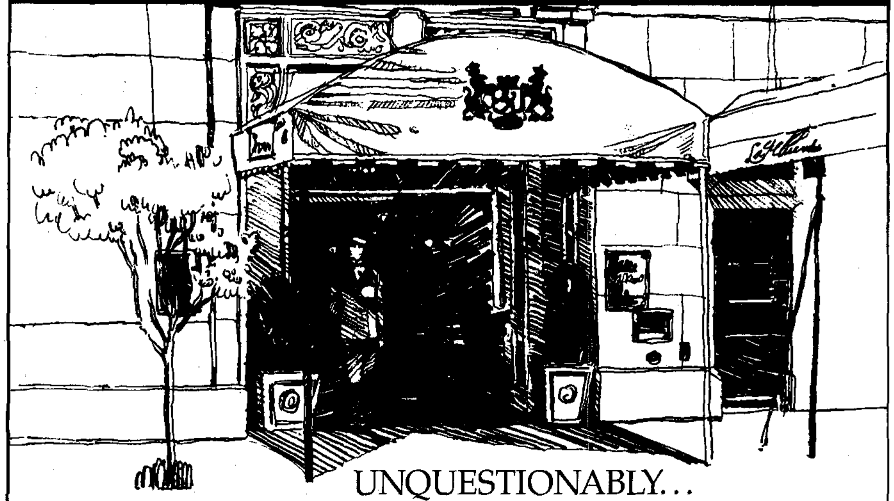

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directing a sing-along. With Makea McDonald, soprano; Dolores Ramsey, mezzo-soprano; John Morrison, tenor; and André Solomon-Glover, baritone. (Riverside Dr. at 120th St. Dec. 9 at 4. Admission by contribution.) . . . **ST. THOMAS CHOIR:** Gerre Hancock directing. With Kathryn Domoney, soprano; Drew Minter, countertenor; Gregg Carder, tenor; Glendower Jones, bass; and the Concert Royal baroque orchestra. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013. Dec 11 and Dec. 13 at 7:30.) . . . **NATIONAL CHORAL COUNCIL:** Martin Josman (and twenty-two guest conductors) directing the annual sing-in, with organ accompaniment. With Crail Conner, soprano; Phyllis Jo Kubey, mezzo-soprano; Gregory Mercer, tenor; and John Ostendorf, bass. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 12 at 7:30.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**SEMIRAMIDE,** Rossini's tragedy wherein the Queen of Babylon discov[illegible]s that being involved with too many men at the same time can prove problematic; with Lella Cuberli, Marilyn Horne, Chris Me[illegible]t, and Samuel Ramey; conducted by James Conlon. (Dec. 3 at 7:30.) . . . With Lella Cuberli, Marilyn Horne, Stanford Olsen, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (Dec. 7 and Dec. 12 at 7:30.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA,** with Diana Soviero, Jerry Hadley, and Brian Schexnayder; Rico Saccani. (Dec. 4 at 8 and Dec. 8 at 1:30.) . . . **SALOME,** with Hildegard Behrens, Helga Dernesch, Graham Clark, and James Courtney; James Conlon. (Dec. 5 at 8:30.) . . . With Hildegard Behrens, Helga Dernesch, Graham Clark, and Ekkehard Wlaschiha; James Conlon. (Dec. 10 at 8:30.) . . . **PORGY AND BESS,** with Myra Merritt, Marvis Martin, Karen Williams, Larry Marshall, and Terry Cook; Robert Duerr. (Dec. 6 at 7:30.) . . . **ANDREA CHÉNIER,** with Aprile Millo, Camellia Johnson, Nicola Martinucci, and Sherrill Milnes; Julius Rudel. (Dec. 8 and Dec. 11 at 8.)

JOHN BROWNLEE OPERA THEATRE—Siegfried Matthus's "Cornet Christoph Rilke's Song of Love and Death," loosely derived from a Rilke epic; sung in English. Conducted by David Gilbert and staged by Linda Brovsky. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802. Dec. 5 and Dec. 7 at 8, and Dec. 9 at 2:30.)

"AMAHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS"—Dino Anagnost conducts the Little Orchestra Society's staged production of Menotti's Christmas opera; with soprano Ted Huffman and mezzo-soprano Eugenie Grunewald. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 6 at 6; Dec. 7 at 6 and 8; Dec. 8 at 12, 2, 4, and 6; and Dec. 9 at 4 and 6.)

"LONG TONGUES"—Julius Hemphill's jazz opera deals with African-American communities in the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties. Conducted by Jack Jeffers and staged by Judith Jackson; featuring tenor Thomas Young. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Dec. 6-7 at 8.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Presenting "Die Fledermaus." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Dec. 8 at 7:30 and Dec. 9 at 2:30.)

JUILLIARD OPERA CENTER—Two operas by William Schuman—"The Mighty Casey" (1953) and "A Question of Taste" (his most recent opera, based on a story by Roald Dahl)—in fully staged productions conducted by Gera[illegible] Schwarz. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 874-7515. Dec. 12 at 8. Through Dec. 16.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher H[illegible]. Charles Dutoit conducts Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique," Jacques Hétu's "Images de la Révolution," and Glazunov's Violin Concerto, with Cho-Liang Lin. (Dec. 4 at 7:30.) . . . ¶ Leonard Slatkin conducts Rossini's "Semiramide" Overture, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, and Bernstein's "Arias and Barcarolles," in an orchestration by Bright Sheng (featuring soprano Judy Kaye and baritone Kurt Ollman). (Dec. 6 at 8 and Dec. 7 at 11 A.M.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA—Christoph Eschenbach conducts Bruckner's Seventh Symphony and, from the keyboard, Mozart's C-Major Concerto, K. 467. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 4 at 8.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S—Roger Norrington conducts Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.)

MANHATTAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—Richard Auldon Clark conducts works by Copland,

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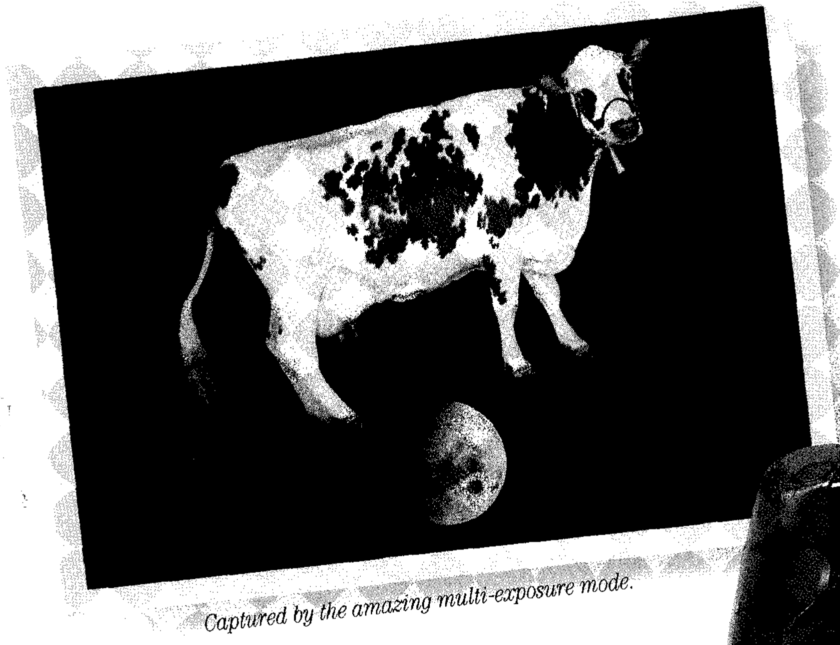

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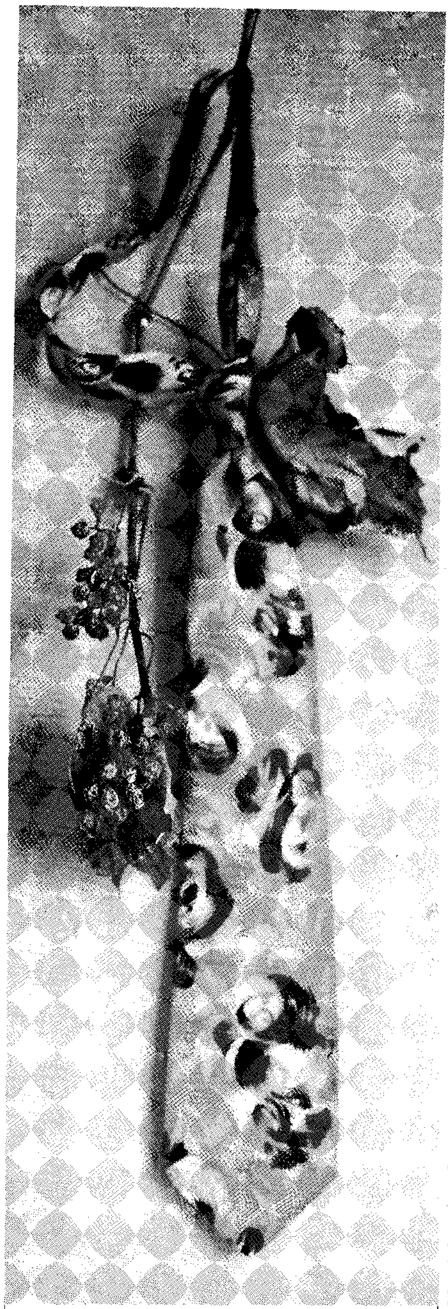

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Dvořák, Giovanni Gabrieli, and Saint-Saëns (his Organ Symphony, with William Trafka). (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 227. Dec. 5 at 8.)

New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra—Robert Black conducts Mahler's Sixth Symphony and doubles as soloist in Mozart's E-Flat Piano Concerto, K. 449. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. Dec. 7 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Maxim Shostakovich conducts his father's Eleventh Symphony, as well as music by Haydn and Schnittke (his Piano Concerto, with soloist Alexander Slobodyanik). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Dec. 7-8 at 8, and Dec. 9 at 2.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts music by Haydn, Hanson, Piston, and Schumann (his Piano Concerto, with Bella Davidovich as soloist). (92nd Street Y. Dec. 8 at 8 and Dec. 9 at 3.)

Manhattan Symphony Orchestra—Glen Cortese conducts music by Bartók, Stravinsky, and Frank Martin. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Dec. 8 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

New York Youth Symphony—Samuel Wong conducts works by Bruckner (his Fourth Symphony) and Carolyn Yarnell; Anthony Aibel leads a Mendelssohn overture. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 9 at 3. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 581-5933.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Paul Zukofsky conducts Messiaen's mammoth "Turangalîla" Symphony, including a guest appearance by Jean Laurendeau, playing the *ondes martenot*. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 11 at 8. For information about tickets, which are free, call 874-7515.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducts Schoenberg's Piano Concerto (with Peter Serkin) and Verdi's "Four Sacred Pieces" (with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus); and all join for Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy." (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 12-13 at 8.)

RECITALS

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Music by four Romantic masters, performed by soprano Dawn Upshaw, violinist James Buswell, clarinettist David Shifrin, cellist Leslie Parnas, and pianist Lee Luvisi: Schubert's "The Shepherd on the Rock"; selections from Schumann's "Myrthen"; Mendelssohn's D-Minor Piano Trio; and Brahms' F-Minor Clarinet Sonata. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 4 at 7:30.)

Jean-Yves Thibaudet—Piano, performing works of Brahms, Liszt, and Ravel. (Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 4 at 8.)

Todd Palmer—Clarinet, with pianist Carol Archer, in a program of Debussy, Ives (the clarinettist's own arrangement of the Third Violin Sonata), and others. Presented by Young Concert Artists. (92nd Street Y. Dec. 4 at 8.)

John Cage—The composer performs (or doesn't perform, depending on one's point of view) what may be the definitive interpretation of "4′33″," his notorious work that consists of four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence. The evening also includes four other Cage works (performed with a little help from his friends) and some conversation with the composer. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Dec. 4 at 8.)

Richard Hervig and Lawrence Widdoes—A program of chamber music by the two composers. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 4 at 8.)

Eugene Istomin—Piano, performing three Beethoven sonatas and a fantasy. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.)

Angelina Réaux—The soprano performs songs from each of Kurt Weill's nine Broadway shows, accompanied by the Music Today ensemble (playing the composer's original orchestrations), conducted by Robert Kapilow. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.)

Panayis Lyras—The Greek pianist performs works by Beethoven, Schumann, and others. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.)

Finnish Music—To celebrate the hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of Sibelius's birth, soprano Taru Valjakka and the Arioso Ensemble perform selections from his songs and chamber music, as well as works by Thomas Byström (a Finnish contemporary of Beethoven), Toivo Kuula, Aulis Sallinen, and Jouni Kaipainen. (92nd Street Y. Dec. 5 at 8.)

Chamber Players of the League-ISCM—An ensemble performs works by Stefan Wolpe, Gunther Schuller, Richard Wilson, Colin Matthews, Edward T. Cone, Michael Ross, and Edgard Varèse. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.)

New York Philomusica—Playing chamber music by Beethoven, including the "Archduke" Trio and the piano-winds quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 6 at 8.)

Peter Hill—The English pianist performs works by Mozart, Beethoven, and Oliver Knussen, as well as the seventh book of "Catalogue d'Oiseaux" by Messiaen (with whom Mr. Hill is especially identified). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Dec. 6 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Solo and chamber works by Schubert, Prokofiev, and Sergei Taneyev. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Dec. 6 at 7:30 and Dec. 9 at 4.)

Ruth Laredo—The pianist discusses and [illegible]forms solo and chamber music by Clara Sc[illegible]mann; with violinist Eric Grossman and c[illegible]list Leo Grinhauz. (Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 7 at 8.)

Ridge String Quartet—Performing quartets b[illegible] Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Bartók. (Wei[illegible] Recital Hall. Dec. 7 at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—Performing string quar[illegible] by Haydn and Borodin, and, with violist Iu[illegible] Kavafian, Mozart's C-Major Quintet, K. 515. (Metropolitan Museum. Dec. 8 at 8.)

Raphaëlla Smits—The Belgian classical guitarist performs music from the baroque to the present. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 8 at 8.)

Carol Ferri—The pianist performs works of Schubert (the B-Flat Sonata, Op. posth.), Chopin, Ravel, and Copland (his "Four Piano Blues"). (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 9 at 2.)

Richard Goode—The pianist performs sonatas by Beethoven and Schubert, as well as Schumann's "Davidsbündlertänze." (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 10 at 8.)

Manhattan String Quartet—Performing two quartets—Bartók's Third and Schoenberg's Fourth—as well as Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht" (with guest violist Toby Appel and cellist Carter Brey). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 10 at 8.)

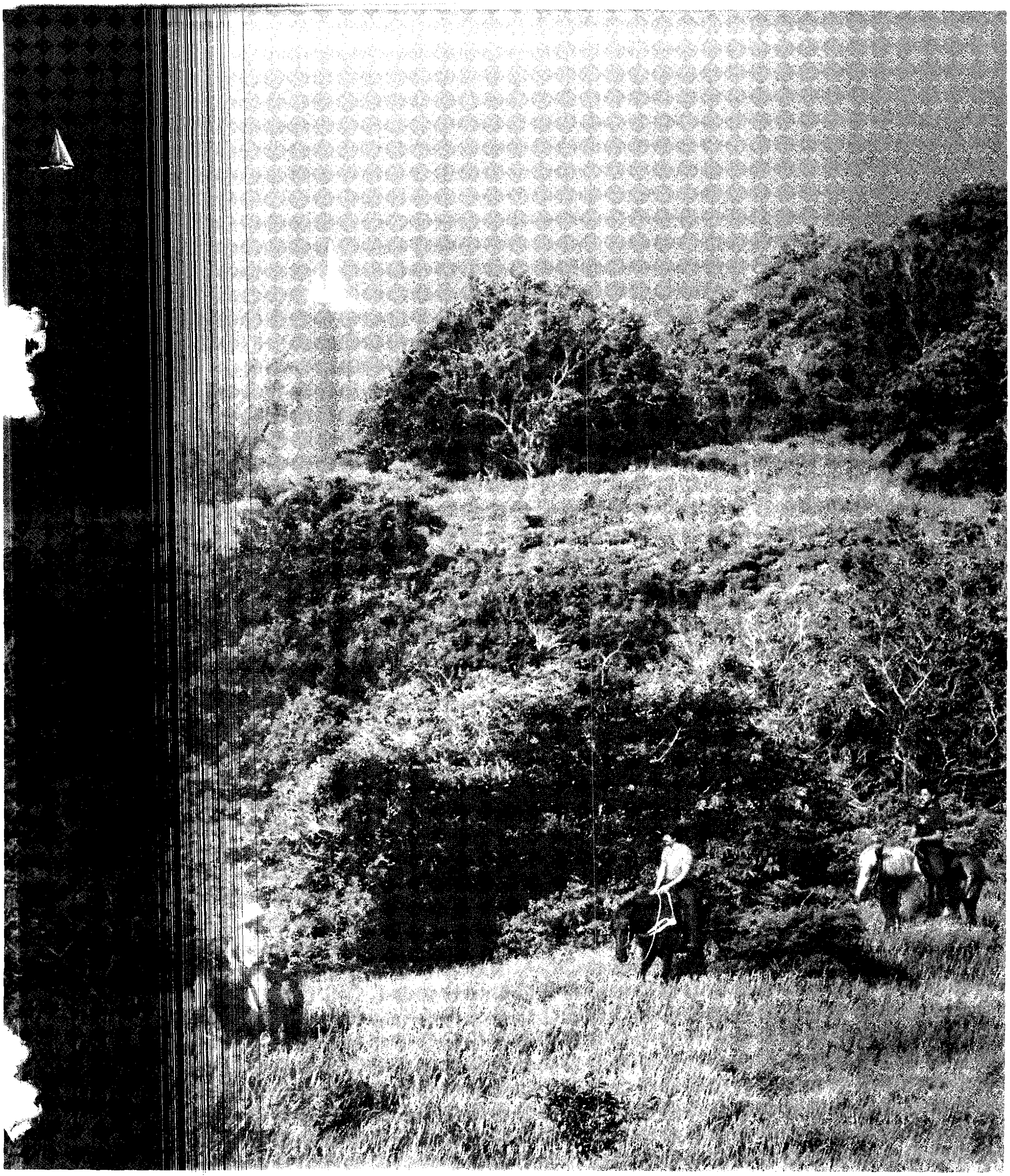
Robert Stallman—Flute, performing baroque sonatas (with harpsichordist Edwin Swanborn) and works by Martinů, William Thomas McKinley, and others (with pianist Erika Nickrenz). (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 10 at 8.)

American Brass Quintet—The group celebrates its thirtieth anniversary by performing music written in the past three decades by Elliott Carter, Jacob Druckman, Gilbert Amy, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 11 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Harry Connick, Jr.—"If I played rock and roll, I'd be revered as the greatest rock-and-roll musician in the world. It's music that requires very little knowledge and not much talent. . . . Whoa, there. . . . Yes, he's here again: another charming, witty musician high on his own accomplishments. Still, at only twenty-three, Harry Connick, Jr., should be forgiven for his jazzy prejudices. This smokin' New Orleans pianist and vocalist fronts his big band with such panache and writes his tunes with such meticulous devotion to detail that it's easy to see how he falls for himself. His songs-for-swinging-lovers approach to music—sweeping strings and muted horns—is the perfect counterpoint to his precocious world-weary crooning, which conjures up images of a bygone era. This is not, however, just an incredible simulation of the past. Connick is not worried about corre[illegible]ness of attitude; he has an honest enthusias[illegible] for the music he is making. He's cute, too[illegible] great hands. (Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 20[illegible] W. 46th St. Dec. 4-8 at 8. Through Dec. 8. For information about tickets, call 247-4777.)

Living Colour—There was the slightest tinge of bad faith in the success of this black rock band's first album, "Vivid" (1988), which sold more than two million copies. The music was fierce, thundering speed metal; lyrically and sonically, it was "hard-hitting and finger-pointing," to quote lead singer Corey Glover, but not particularly distinguishable from the rest of the post-Van Halen pack. It was impossible not to suspect that rock's lionization of Living Colour was related to its guilty conscience about heavy metal's barely acknowledged borrowings from black artists, especially in light of the contemptible radio-playlist apartheid of the eighties. The new album, "Time's Up," clears the air. It's sim-



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ply one of the best rock records of the year: the songwriting and performances are terrific, and the lessons in crowd taming that the band learned on the road during the past three years are reflected in a new willingness to please. It's a leap worth celebrating. (Academy Theatre, 234 W. 43rd St. 947-5850. Dec. 11-13 at 8.)

Frank Sinatra and Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme—Wading in the frothy swirl of Steve & Eydie should be the perfect ankle-tickling interlude before the fifty-foot wave of Frank hits the beach. The Chairman of the Board was, by all accounts, awe-inspiring earlier this year at Radio City, and the new four-CD retrospective of his Reprise years is just one more reason, among several thousand, to see this irreducible eminence in person. Don't think that it's hip to skip the opening act, however. Leave that to the dour, pitiable hard-core Sinatra purists. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Dec. 11-12 at 8.)

Edie Brickell & New Bohemians and John Hiatt—Once upon a time, Rickie Lee Jones met a group of bubble-gum Deadheads in her Poetry of Dylan class at Vineland Junior College, and she started singing with this big giant smile on her face, and Professor Maynard G. Krebs, snapping his fingers, said the group sounded like a bunch of bohemians. . . . Sorry! We were dozing there for a minute while listening to the new Edie Brickell album, "Ghost of a Dog." Before this soporific experience, we meant to recommend the folk-rocker John Hiatt, who opens this concert. He's made at least one great album, "Bring the Family," and writes funny songs as well as wrenching ones, and sings them in a thick, drawling yawp of a voice. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Dec. 12-13 at 8.)

Indigo Girls—Beacon Theatre. Dec. 3-4 at 8.

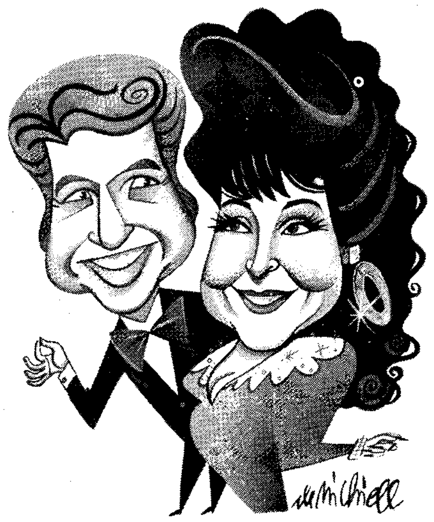
"Highlights in Jazz"—Presenting Jon Faddis, Lew Soloff, Barbara Carroll, and others. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Dec. 6 at 8.)

Holly Near—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 7 at 8.

The Whispers—Beacon Theatre. Dec. 7 at 7:30 and 11, and Dec. 8 at 7:30.

Maureen Tucker—St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Dec. 8 at 8.

"Griots of West Africa"—Performances by Gambia's Fabala Kanute and Jali Madi. With accompaniment by singers Jomarh Kouyate and Mariana Suso, and others. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Dec. 8 at 8.)



Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme

Jimmy Sturr and His Orchestra—Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Dec. 9 at 8.

Giora Feidman—With Adam Rogers and Anthony Falanga. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Dec. 11 at 8.)

"Folk Masters: Traditional Music in the Americas"—Dec. 4 at 8: Doc Tate Nevaquaya, the Akwesasne Mohawk Singers, Lawrence (Teddy Boy) Houle, and the Badlands Singers. . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 8:30: The Original Liberty Jazz Band. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 8: Joe Cormier, Alison Krauss, Michael Doucet, and Claude Williams. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. The series runs through Dec. 15.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Giants—Vs. the Minnesota Vikings, Dec. 9 at 1.

Jets—Away until Dec. 16, when they face the Indianapolis Colts.

Rangers—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Dec. 3 at 7:30.

Islanders—Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Dec. 4. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Dec. 11. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Dec. 5. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Dec. 8. (Game time, 7:45.)

Knicks—Vs. the Orlando Magic, Dec. 4. . . . ¶ Vs. the Miami Heat, Dec. 11. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Seattle Supersonics, Dec. 4. . . . ¶ Vs. the Phoenix Suns, Dec. 7. . . . ¶ Vs. the Charlotte Hornets, Dec. 11. (Game time, 7:30.)

(The Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands; for information about tickets, call 1-201 935-8111. The Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Candlelight Tours—At the Old Merchant's House, a five-story East Village building that in the eighteen-hundreds was the dwelling of marine hardware merchant Seabury Tredwell, his wife Eliza, and their eight children. The Tredwells' original furnishings are intact; the romance of the antique setting is intensified by candlelight. (29 E. 4th St. 777-1089. Dec. 11-13 from 5:30 to 7:30.)

Laser Show—In the plaza at the foot of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, colored lights will cast images of Santa, blizzards, reindeer, and other winter scenes. The ten-minute light show starts at sundown and is repeated at fifteen-minute intervals until 11. Nightly, through Dec. 22.

Films—"A Publisher Is Known by the Company He Keeps" and "Dialogue," two short documentaries (directed by Jules Schwerin) about Alfred A. Knopf and the authors with whom he was associated. (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. Dec. 7 at 6:30. For information about tickets, call 787-6557.)

Tea Dances—A break from the stress of shopping in midtown: free tea and swing dancing, with live music by Buck Clayton's big band, in the arcade of 55 E. 52nd St. Dec. 8 from 3 to 6. The dances continue weekly through Dec. 29.

Readings and Talks—Dec. 6 at 7: Allen Grossman and Richard Howard read from their own poetry. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 8: Sharon Olds reads from her newest book of poetry, "The Sign of Saturn," and from other works. (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 8: Galway Kinnell and Carol Conroy read from their own poetry. (Ceres Gallery, 91 Franklin St. Admission by contribution; proceeds benefit the homeless.) . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 2:30: Allen Ginsberg and the Russian poet Andrey Voznesensky read from their own works and translations of each other's poems. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the reading.) . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6: Shirley Chisholm talks about her career in Congress. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 8: The second event in the "Poets and Painters" series pairs Robert Creeley with Brice Marden, and Jorie Graham with Eric Fischl in talks about art, poetry, and collaboration. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 6: Rachel Hadas and Mark Rudman read from their own poetry. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Memorandum—Chanukkah starts at sundown on Dec. 11.

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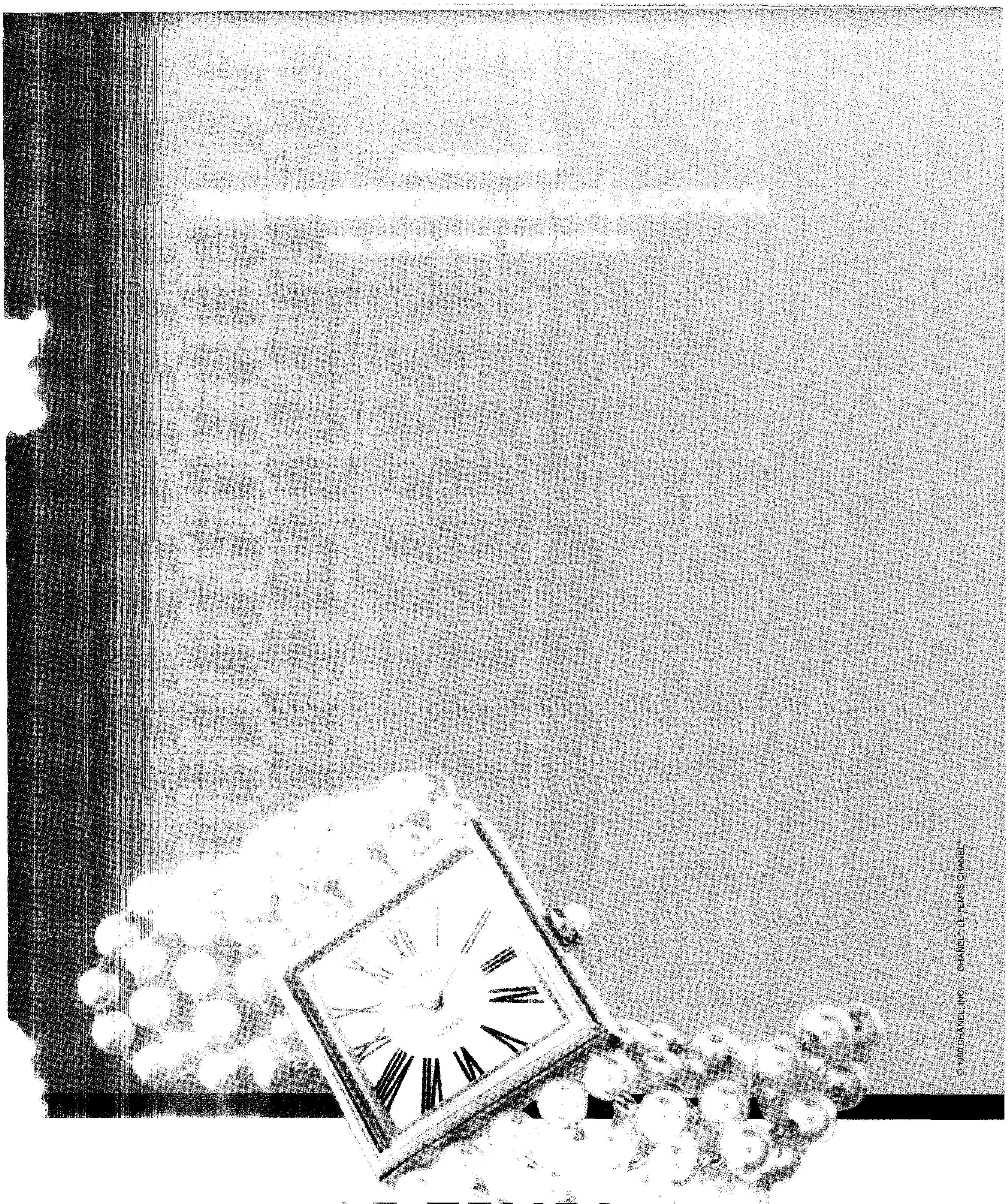

LE TEMPS

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 34.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "To Sleep with Anger" (†).
Theatre 2: "Metropolitan" (directed by Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, and Taylor Nichols.
Theatre 3: "Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (†).
Theatre 4: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 5: "C'est la Vie" (Diane Kurys), with Nathalie Baye and Richard Berry.
Theatre 6: "Tune in Tomorrow . . ." (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Dec. 6: "Volpone" (1939, Maurice Tourneur; in French), with Harry Baur, Louis Jouvet, and Jacqueline Delubac.
From Dec. 7: "A Game for Six Lovers" (1960, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze; in French), with Bernadette Lafont, Françoise Brion, and Alexandra Stewart.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus).
Theatre 2: "Avalon" (†).
Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif.
Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (Kevin Costner), with Costner.
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 6: "Dances with Wolves." From Dec. 7: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 4: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).
Theatre 5: "Jacob's Ladder" (Adrian Lyne), with Tim Robbins, Elizabeth Peña, and Danny Aiello.
Theatre 6: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 2: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover, Gary Busey and Rubén Blades.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Nutcracker Prince" (Paul Schibli), an animated film.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
Theatre 2: "GoodFellas" (†).

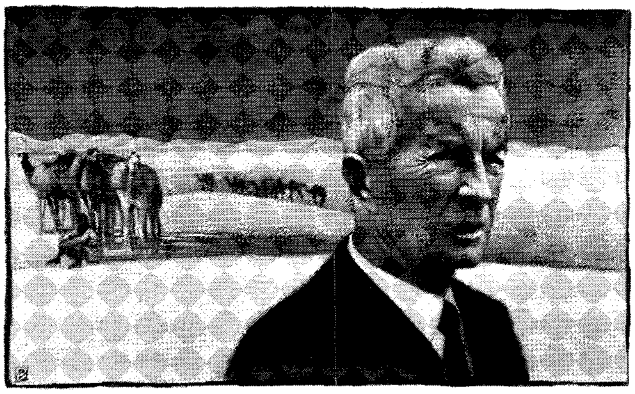
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau; in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Misery."

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Henry & June" (†).



Paul Bowles: "The Sheltering Sky"

Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film.
Theatre 3: "My Twentieth Century" (Ildiko Enyedi; in Hungarian).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Avalon" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 6: "Jacob's Ladder" (Adrian Lyne), with Tim Robbins, Elizabeth Peña, and Danny Aiello. From Dec. 7: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through Dec. 4: "The Krays" (†).
Dec. 5-11: "The Grifters" (†).
From Dec. 12: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 2: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Dances with Wolves" (Kevin Costner), with Costner.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 6: (Matinées only) "The Nutcracker Prince" (Paul Schibli), an animated film; and (evenings only) "GoodFellas" (†). From Dec. 7: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 2: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 4: "Berkeley in the Sixties" (directed by Mark Kitchell). From Dec. 5: "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" (Fernando Birri; in Spanish).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: (Separate admissions) "Kiss Me Kate" (1953, George Sidney), with Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, Ann Miller, and Keenan Wynn; and "Akira" (Katsuhiro Otomo), a Japanese animated science-fiction film.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "The Krays" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Henry & June" (†).
Theatre 2: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
Theatre 2: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film.
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 6: "My Twentieth Century" (Ildiko Enyedi; in Hungarian). From Dec. 7: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 4: (Separate admissions) "Jacob's Ladder" (Adrian Lyne), with Tim Robbins, Elizabeth Peña, and Danny Aiello; and "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Henry & June" (†).
Theatre 3: "Miller's Crossing" (Joel Coen), with Gabriel Byrne, Albert Finney, Marcia Gay Harden, John Turturro, and Jon Polito.
Theatre 4: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 5: (Matinées only) "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin; and (evenings only) "Predator 2."
Theatre 6: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.
Theatre 7: "The Krays" (†).
Theatre 8: "Home Alone."
Theatre 9: Through Dec. 11: "Misery." From Dec. 12: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Child's Play 2" (John Lafia), with Alex Vincent.
Theatre 2: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Henry & June" (†).
Theatre 2: "Child's Play 2" (John Lafia), with Alex Vincent.
Theatre 3: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.
Theatre 4: "Avalon" (†).
Theatre 5: "Memphis Belle" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Matthew Modine.
Theatre 6: "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep, Shirley MacLaine, Gene Hackman, and Dennis Quaid.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Dec. 6: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
From Dec. 7: "Edward Scissorhands" (Tim Burton), with Johnny Depp, Winona Ryder, and Dianne Wiest.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Ghost" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through Dec. 11: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).
From Dec. 12: "The Sheltering Sky" (Bernardo Bertolucci), with Debra Winger, John Malkovich, and Campbell Scott.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"C'est la Vie" (Diane Kurys), with Nathalie Baye and Richard Berry.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Vincent & Theo" (†).

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PRESCRIPTIVES

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Tune in Tomorrow . . ." (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dances with Wolves" (Kevin Costner), with Costner.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven; in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 6: "Talai (The Law)" (Idrissa Ouedraogo). From Dec. 7: "Freeze—Die—Come to Life" (Vitaly Kanevski; in Russian).
Theatre 3: "L'Atalante" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Dec. 11: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
From Dec. 12: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Jacob's Ladder" (Adrian Lyne), with Tim Robbins, Elizabeth Peña, and Danny Aiello.
Theatre 2: "Avalon" (†).
Theatre 3: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 4: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).
Theatre 5: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif.
Theatre 6: Through Dec. 6: "GoodFellas" (†). From Dec. 7: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film.
Theatre 2: "Henry & June" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "The Nutcracker Prince" (directed by Paul Schibli), an animated film.
Theatre 2: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 3: "Predator 2."
Theatre 4: "Jacob's Ladder" (Adrian Lyne), with Tim Robbins, Elizabeth Peña, and Danny Aiello.
Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Dec. 6: "Marked for Death" (Dwight H. Little), with Steven Seagal, Joanna Pacula, and Keith David. From Dec. 7: "Diamond's Edge" (Stephen Bayly), with Susannah York and Peter Eyre.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, Ted Danson, Nancy Travis, and Robin Weisman.

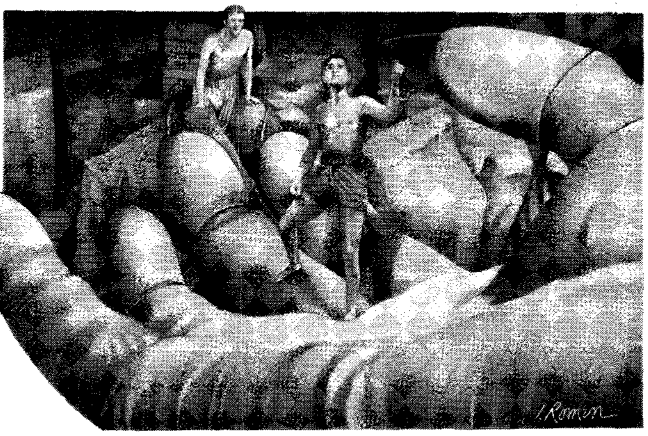
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Graveyard Shift" (Ralph S. Singleton), with David Andrews, Kelly Wolf, Stephen Macht, and Brad Dourif.
Theatre 2: "Death Warrant" (Deran Saradian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Child's Play 2" (John Lafia), with Alex Vincent.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 6: "Graffiti Bridge" (Prince). From Dec. 7: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 2: "Tune in Tomorrow . . ." (†).

Alexander Korda's irresistibly outlandish "The Thief of Bagdad" (playing December 9-10 at the Biograph Cinema) remains, fifty years after its première, one of the four or five best kids' movies ever made. Korda, the Hungarian-born British movie mogul who at times out-Angloed the Anglos, surrounded this project with such disparate directors as Ludwig Berger, Michael Powell, Tim Whelan, and (uncredited) William Cameron Menzies and Zoltán Korda (Alexander's brother); Charles Crichton was the editor, André de Toth was a production assistant, and the third Korda brother, Vincent, designed the sets. The result is an Arabian Nights extravaganza that takes place mostly during the Arabian days, under a sun that shimmers on palace turrets and turns brown-skinned men to bronze. "The Thief of Bagdad" creates a child's-eye view of a golden age—and thus captures how kids feel when they first discover the real *world and think it's magical. The Force this movie argues for is imagination.*



John Justin and Sabu

The teen-age Sabu embodies the title character, the right-hand urchin of a prince (John Justin) dethroned by a Wagnerian wizard (Conrad Veidt) who threatens to wed the prince's true love (June Duprez). Sabu, not Justin, acts out the splashiest derring-do—mastering a genie played with gusto by Rex Ingram (De Lawd in the 1936 film "The Green Pastures," here he mixes that role with "De Debbil"), and wresting the All-Seeing Eye from the Goddess of Night, who lives on the Roof of the World. Caught in the Goddess's castle between a fearsome spider and a couple of octopuses, Sabu arouses children's worst fears of the sky above and the sea below, only to vanquish those fears lustily. Unlike watered-down family adventures, "The Thief of Bagdad" indulges kids' revenge fantasies. But the film's more idyllic conceits are just as striking as its action. Miles Malleson is the sultan who swaps his daughter, Duprez, for a flying horse, because he loves gimmicks and toys; he even wishes his subjects were toys, so they would do whatever he wanted. "The Thief of Bagdad" indulges our own childlike love of gadgets while warning us against getting lost in playland.

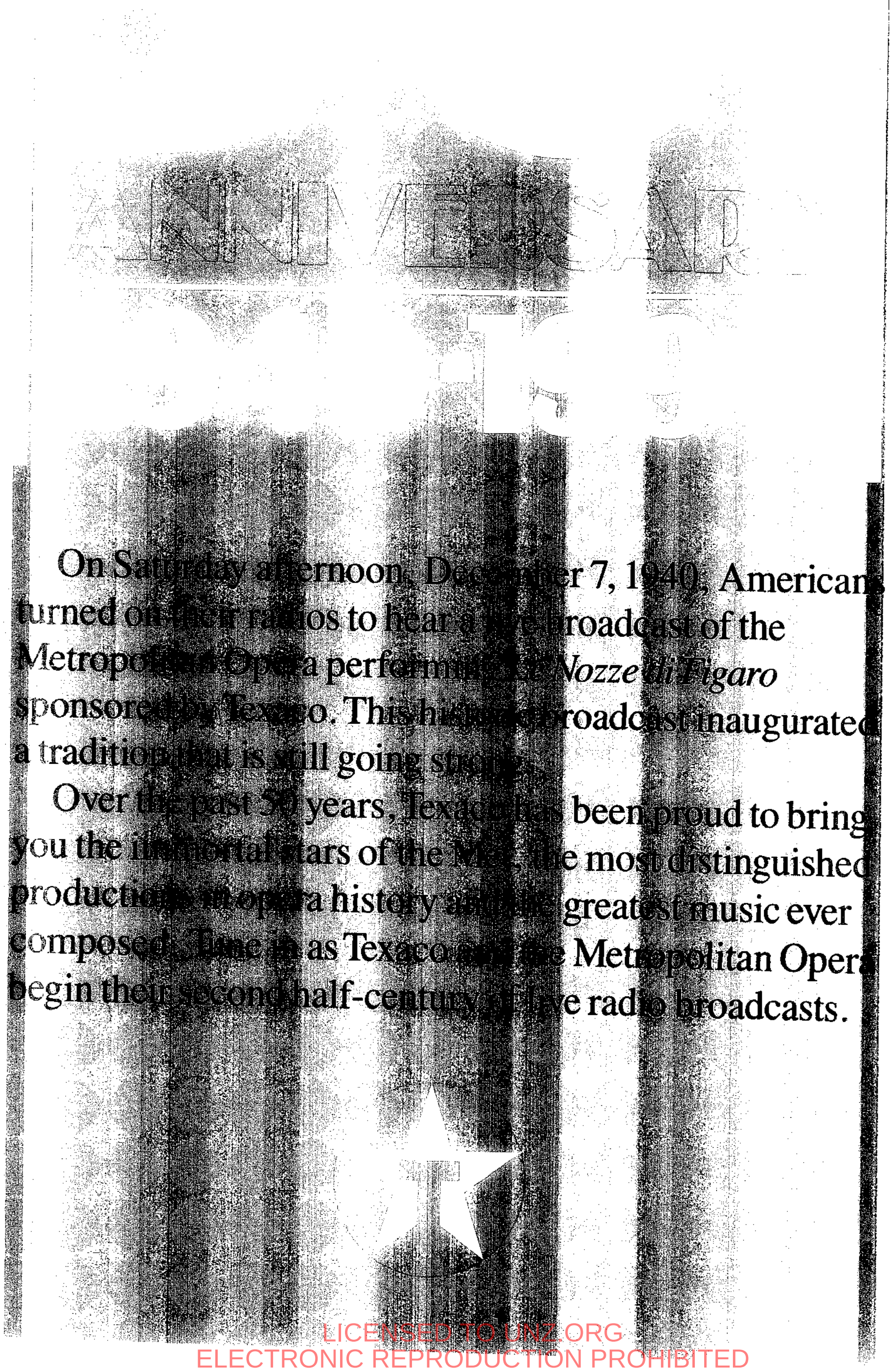
REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Dec. 3: "The Mark of Zorro" (1940, directed by Rouben Mamoulian), with Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, and Basil Rathbone; and "Chad Hanna" (1940, Henry King), with Henry Fonda, Linda Darnell, Dorothy Lamour, and Jane Darwell.
Dec. 4-5: "Strike Up the Band" (1940, Busby Berkeley), with Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, and June Preisser; and "Dance, Girl, Dance" (1940, Dorothy Arzner), with Maureen O'Hara, Louis Hayward, Lucille Ball, Maria Ouspenskaya, and Ralph Bellamy.
Dec. 6-8: "The Grapes of Wrath" (1940, John Ford), with Henry Fonda, Jane Darwell, and John Carradine; and "The Westerner" (†).
Dec. 9-10: "The Blue Bird" (1940, Wal[illegible] Lang), with Shirley Temple, Spring Byington, Nigel Bruce, Gale Sondergaard, and Johnny Russell; and "The Thief of Bagdad" (see blurb at left).
Nov. 11-12: "The Long Voyage Home" (†), and "Knute Rockne—All American" (1940, Lloyd Bacon), with Pat O'Bri[illegible] Ronald Reagan, Gale Page, and Donald Crisp.

Cinema Village, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through Dec. 4: "Labyrinth of Passion" (1982, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish); and "Dark Passion."
Dec. 5-8: "My Beautiful Laundrette" (1986, Stephen Frears), with Roshan Seth, Saeed Jaffrey, Gordon Warnecke, and Daniel Day-Lewis; and "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (1988, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura, Fernando Guillén, Julieta Serrano, Kiti Manver, Rossy De Palma, Maria Barranco, and Antonio Banderas.
Dec. 9-11: "In a Glass Cage" (1989, Agustin Villaronga; in Spanish); and "Taxi zum Klo" (1981, Frank Ripploh; in German).
From Dec. 12: "Too Beautiful for You" (1990, Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Josiane Balasko, and Carole Bouquet; and "Monsieur Hire" (1990, Patrice Leconte; in French), with Michel Blanc and Sandrine Bonnaire.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Dec. 3: "Who Are You, Polly Magoo?" (1966, William Klein), with Dorothy MacGowan, Jean Rochefort, Sami Frey, Philippe Noiret, and Delphine Seyrig; and "The Model Couple" (1976, Klein; in French), with André Dussollier and Eddie Constantine.
Dec. 4: "Mode in France" (1985, William Klein), with Grace Jones, Kenzo, Agnes B., Castelbajac, Gaultier, and Claude Montana; and "The French" (Klein), with Björn Borg, Yannick Noah, John McEnroe, Ilie Nastase, Chris Evert, Jimmy Connors, and Ivan Lendl.
Dec. 5-6: "Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther" (1970, William Klein) and "PanAfrican Cultural Festival" (1969, Klein), both documentaries.
Dec. 7-10: "The Little Richard Story" (1980, William Klein), a documentary.
From Dec. 11: "Mister Freedom" (1968, Wi[illegible]liam Klein); and the Klein sequence from "Far from Vietnam" (1967).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254[illegible]7400)
Dec. 3: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919, Robert Wiene; a German silent film), with Conrad Veidt; and "M" (1932, Fritz Lang; in German), with Peter Lorre.
Dec. 4: "A Night at the Opera" (1935, Sam Wood), with the Marx Brothers, Kitty Carlisle, Allan Jones, and Margaret Dumont; and "A Day at the Races" (1937, Wood), with the Marx Brothers, Jones, Maureen O'Sullivan, and Dumont.
Dec. 5: "Indiscretion of an American Wife" (1954, Vittorio De Sica), with Jennifer Jones, Montgomery Clift, Richard Beymer, and Gino Cervi; and "The Gold of Naples" (1956, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian), with Sophia Loren, De Sica, Silvana Mangano, and Totò.
Dec. 6: "Los Olvidados" ("The Young and



ANNIVERSARY

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

the Damned"; 1950, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish); and "Viridiana" (1961, Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal.

Dec. 7-8: "Wuthering Heights" (1939, William Wyler), with Merle Oberon, Laurence Olivier, David Niven, and Flora Robson; and "Jane Eyre" (1944, Robert Stevenson), with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles.

Dec. 9: "My Man Godfrey" (1936, Gregory La Cava), with Carole Lombard, William Powell, Mischa Auer, and Alice Brady; and "Nothing Sacred" (1937, William Wellman), with Lombard, Fredric March, Walter Connolly, and Charles Winninger.

Dec. 10: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian); and "Miracle in Milan" (†).

Dec. 11: "Deception" (†); *and* "Beyond the Forest" (1949, King Vidor), with Bette Davis, Joseph Cotten, and David Brian.

Dec. 12: "Shadow of the Thin Man" (1941, W. S. Van Dyke) and "Song of the Thin Man" (1947, Edward Buzzell), both with Myrna Loy and William Powell.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy *and* Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Dec. 3 at 2:30: "Nickelodeon" (1976, directed by Peter Bogdanovich), with Ryan O'Neal, Burt Reynolds, and Tatum O'Neal. . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 3: "The Ear" (1969, Pavel Kohout; in Czech). . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 6: "Silence" (1969, Milan Peer) and "Elective Affinities" (1968, Karel Vachek; in Czech). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 3 and 6: "*Todos Santos Cuchumatan: Report* from a Guatemalan Village" (1982) and "Todos Santos: The Survivors" (1989), both documentaries by Olivia Carrescia. . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 6: "GoodFellas" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 2:30: "The Children's Hour" (1969, Arturo Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Carlos Savage. . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 3: "Pictures of the Old World" (1972, Dusan Hanak; in Slovak). . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 6: "Love Lies" (1988, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Alonso Echanove. . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 6: "The Ear." . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 2: "Matinée" (1976, Jaime Humberto Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Héctor Bonilla. . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 2:30: "Silence" and "Elective Affinities." . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 5: "Homework" (1990, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Maria Rojo. . . . ¶ *Dec.* 8 at 5: "Funeral Ceremonies" (1969, Zdenek Sirovy; in Czech). . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 2: "Castle of Purity" (1972, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Claudio Brook. . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 2:30: "The Ear." . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 5: "Pictures of the Old World." . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 5: "Holy Office" (1973, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Jorge Luke. . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at *2:30: "The Dog's Birthday"* (1974, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Jorge Martínez de Hoyos. . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6: "Passion According to Berenice" (1976, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Martha Navarro and Pedro Armendáriz, Jr. . . . ¶ Dec. 10 at 6:30: "Dream Documentary" (1981), "House of UnAmerican Activities" (1983), and "*Dreams of China" (1989), all by Fred Marx,* who will be present. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at *2:30:* Three 1970 Mexican films by Ripstein, in Spanish—"Crime," "Beauty," and "Exorcism." . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 2:30: "Silence" and "Elective Affinities." . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 6: "Time to Die" (1966, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Marga López. . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 6: "Funeral Ceremonies."

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," dramas shown on television over the past thirty years. Dec. 4-8: Ernest J. Gaines' "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" (1974, CBS), with Cicely Tyson. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1. . . . ¶ Programs about contemporary comedians, and people who influenced *them. Rosanne Barr: Dec.* 4-5: "Guilt by Disassociation" (1989, ABC), an episode of "Roseanne"; "The Unemployment Story" (1976, CBS), an episode of "All in the Family," with Carroll O'Connor; and "TV or Not TV" (1955, CBS), an episode of "The Honeymooners," with Jackie Gleason. Dec. 6-8: "Slice of Life" (1989, ABC), an episode of "Roseanne"; "The Mating Game" (1968, ABC), *an episode of "That Girl," with Marlo* Thomas; and "The Birth of Pebbles" (1962, ABC), an episode of "The Flintstones." . . . Jane Curtin: Dec. 11-12: "Reruns" (1988, CBS), an episode of "Kate & Allie"; "Harpo Marx" (1955, CBS), an episode of "I Love Lucy," with Lucille Ball and Marx; and "The Christmas Party" (1953, CBS), an episode of "The Honeymooners," with Gleason. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Dec. 5 at 12:30 and 6: "Le Grand Amour" (1968, Pierre Etaix; in French), with Etaix, Annie Fratellini, Nicole Calfan, and Alain Janey. . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Max Linder—The Man in the Silk Hat" (Maud Linder). . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "*A Sunday in the Country*" (1984, Bertrand Tavernier; in French).

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Dec. 3-5 at 7: "Fishing with John" (1990, John Lurie) and "Ilê Aiyê" (1989, David Byrne). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 7, Dec. 7-9 at 7 and 9, and Dec. 10-12 at 7: "Stop Across the Border" (1990, Nicolas Humbert and Werner Penzel). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 9, Dec. 7-8 at 10:30, and Dec. 9 at 8:30: "See You Later/Au Revoir" (1990, Michael Snow), "The P-38 Pilot" (1990, Bruce Baillie), and "John Cage: Man and Myth" (1990, Mitch Corber). . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 9: "Condensations of Sensations" (1988, Carl Brown). . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 8:30: "Re:Entry" (1990, Brown). . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 2: "Vertigo" (1958, Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart and Kim Novak. . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 5: "Light Play: A Tribute to Moholy-Nagy" (Vlada Petric). . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 9: Two films by Michael Snow.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Dec. 4 at noon: "Don't Look Back" (1966, D. A. Pennebaker). . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 2:30: "Virgil Thomson, Composer" (1979, John Huszar), "The River" (1937, Pare Lorentz), and "The Plow That Broke the Plains" (1936, Lorentz). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at noon: "Minnie the Moocher and Many Many More" (1983, Manny Pittson) and "Til the Butcher Cuts Him Down" (1971, Philip Spalding). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at noon: "Monterey Pop" (1968, D. A. Pennebaker). . . . ¶ Dec. 11 at 2:30: "The Nutcracker" (1967, Heinz Liesendahl).

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 81st St. (879-5500)—Dec. 8 at 1:30: "There's Just One Little Thing" (1940, Juan Bustillo Oro; in Spanish, with no English subtitles), with Cantinflas. . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 4 and 6:30: "Macario" (1959, Roberto Gavaldon; in Spanish).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In either the Riklis Theatre or the Warner Communications Screening Room: "Red Scare! Soviet Communism in American Film and Television. 1909-88." Dec. 5-7 at 2: "Assignment Prague" (1959), an episode of "Behind Closed Doors," with Warren Stevens; "The Bishop of the Bayfield" (1955), an episode of "Navy Log"; and "Incident off the China Coast" (1955), an episode of "TV Readers Digest," with Robert Bray. . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 2: "Invasion, U.S.A." (1952, Alfred E. Green), with Dan O'Herlihy. . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 4: "Invasion, U.S.A." (1985, Joseph Zito), with Chuck Norris. . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 2: "The Whip Hand" (1951, William Cameron Menzies), with Elliot Reid and Raymond Burr. . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 4: "Red Planet Mars" (1952, Harry Horner), with Peter Graves. . . . ¶ Dec. 8-9 at 1 and 3 and Dec. 12-14 at 2: "Flash of Darkness" (1955), an episode of "Medic," with Richard Boone; and "The Day North America Is Attacked" (1956), an episode of "Air Power," a docudrama, hosted by Walter Cronkite.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Dec. 6 at 6:30: "Thelonious Monk: Straight No Chaser" (1989, Charlotte Zwerin), "John Coltrane: The Legacy" (1985, Burrill Crohn), and "Alberta Hunter: My Castles Rockin'" (1988, Stuart Goldman). . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 1 and 4:45: "Native Son" (1951, Pierre Chenal), with Richard Wright; and "A Raisin in the Sun" (1961, Daniel Petrie), with Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee, Diana Sands, and Ivan Dixon. . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 6:30: "*Def by Temptation*" (1990, James Bond III), with Kadeem Hardison, Rony Clanton (who will be present at 8), and Bill Nunn; and "House Party" (1990, Reginald Hudlin), with Christopher Reid and Robin Harris. . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 1 and 3:55: "Zou Zou" (1934, Marc Allégret; in French), with Josephine Baker and Jean Gabin; and "Princess Tam Tam" (1935, Edmond T. Gréville; *in French), with Baker and Albert Prejean.* . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 6: "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cook; and "Lord Chango" (1974, Ray Marsh), with Cook.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Akira Kurosawa's Dreams—Not one of its eight segments feels like a real dream. The kind of power that Kurosawa aims for, and intermittently achieves, in this picture is less oneiric than ceremonial. The film is a succession of sweeping dramatic gestures and lofty incantations performed in an atmosphere of hushed solemnity. The second half of "Dreams" is weak: the fifth episode, "Crows," about a fantasy encounter with van Gogh, is a thin conceit; and the remaining three segments are all static, self-conscious, and didactic. But there's greatness in the film's first hour. The opening segment, "Sunshine Through the Rain," is the vision of a small child who wanders into a forest and witnesses a wedding procession of foxes; the sequence has a wholly original sense of the rapturous fear and awe we feel when we first come upon the wonders of the natural world. The second episode, "The Peach Orchard," is also lovely (though its mood and pace are too similar to those of the first). The third segment, "The Blizzard," about four men trapped in a snowstorm, is all snow, howling-wind effects, and bleak, undifferentiated vistas of despair, until Kurosawa pulls a miracle out of the white void: a woman in long black hair and diaphanous robes appears to the party's leader as *he battles sleep. It's a transcendent image,* perhaps the most piercing ever made of the desires that keep people from surrendering to death. And the fourth episode, "The Tunnel," about a man returning from war and encountering his dead comrades, is a brilliant, hypnotic piece of filmmaking. With Akira Terao, who plays the dreamer in six of the segments; Mieko Harada as the Snow Fairy; Martin Scorsese as van Gogh; *and* Chishu Ryu. Cinematography by Takao Saito and Masaharu Ueda. In Japanese.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/10/90.) (Angelika Film Center.)

L'Atalante (1934)—This extraordinary film was the only full-length feature directed by Jean Vigo, who died (at the age of twenty-nine) just three weeks after its première in 1934. The movie had been drastically cut by *the distributor for that first release; it was* partially restored in 1940, and it has now been given another major renovation. Vigo's film now looks and sounds better than ever. The screenplay, rewritten by Vigo and Albert Riéra from an original scenario by Jean Guinée, tells the simple story of a pair of *newlyweds named Jean (Jean Dasté) and* Juliette (Dita Parlo): he's the captain of a river barge called L'Atalante, and she's a girl from one of the villages on his route. As they travel down the river, they become impatient with each other; they are separated, then find each other again, and life resumes its intended course. Vigo treats the story the way a jazz musician treats a popular song, improvising *on the melody* by plunging into its carefully sequenced chords and predictable rhythms and taking them apart to see what they're made of. He is the most playful and the least rigid of the great film artists: his images seduce us with the promise of a larger, richer world and unbounded freedom to roam in it—the promise, that is, of endless stimulation, inexhaustible sensations. The best *thing about this new version is that, for all*

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the restorers' diligence, the film is still messy, imperfect, defiantly incomplete; it's a collection of inspired fragments, the sketchbook of an artist whose imagination was, and will forever remain, gloriously immature. Michel Simon plays a rambunctious old salt called Père Jules, who is the presiding spirit of the movie. Also with Louis Lefèvre and Gilles Margaritis. The stunning cinematography is by Boris Kaufman; Maurice Jaubert wrote the lovely score. In French.—T.R. (11/5/90) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Avalon—In legend, Avalon is an earthly paradise. The writer-director Barry Levinson uses the name as his Rosebud: it's carved into the façade of the castlelike Baltimore apartment house where the five Krichinsky brothers, Jews who immigrated from Eastern Europe before the First World War, make their first American home. In Levinson's view, those early years were a golden age. The film is set mostly during his own childhood, in the late forties, when his parents move to the suburbs, and TV breaks up the clan's social patterns, and the surviving brothers have divided into feuding factions. The scattered fine comic moments don't make up for the wide streak of fuddy-duddyism in the notion that the family used to be the bulwark of the nation's value system. The movie is an elegy to a mythical past, and people emerge from the theatre sniffling. They've been told they're suffering from soul-sickness—the loss of unity, harmony, family music. With Elizabeth Perkins, Aidan Quinn, Kevin Pollak, Armin Mueller-Stahl, and Joan Plowright.—P.K. (10/22/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gemini, Worldwide Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Deception (1946)—Blissfully foolish—a camp classic. Alex Hollenius (Claude Rains) is the greatest composer in the United States; his febrile mistress (Bette Davis) can escape him only by shooting him. Considering that he has set her up in the finest apartment in Manhattan, swaddled her in ermine, drenched her in champagne, and taught her to play the piano with a skill approximating that of Arthur Rubinstein, some might regard this as rank ingratitude. But he's a venomous genius, and an epicure besides, and given to wearing velvet jackets. He treats the cellist (Paul Henreid) whom she loves very shabbily—badgering him until he gets so nervous that he can hardly handle a bow. Irving Rapper, who had directed this trio in "Now, Voyager," lets them run rampant this time, especially the leering Rains, who outdoes Davis in bravura. (She doesn't look young or glamorous, either; she's a rather puffy-faced femme fatale.) John Abbott and Benson Fong are also in the cast. Erich Wolfgang Korngold did the music, with Shura Cherkassky dubbing Davis's "Appassionata." John Collier and Joseph Than adapted the Louis Verneuil play "Monsieur Lamberthier," which had been filmed in 1929, as "Jealousy," with Jeanne Eagels and Fredric March.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 11.)

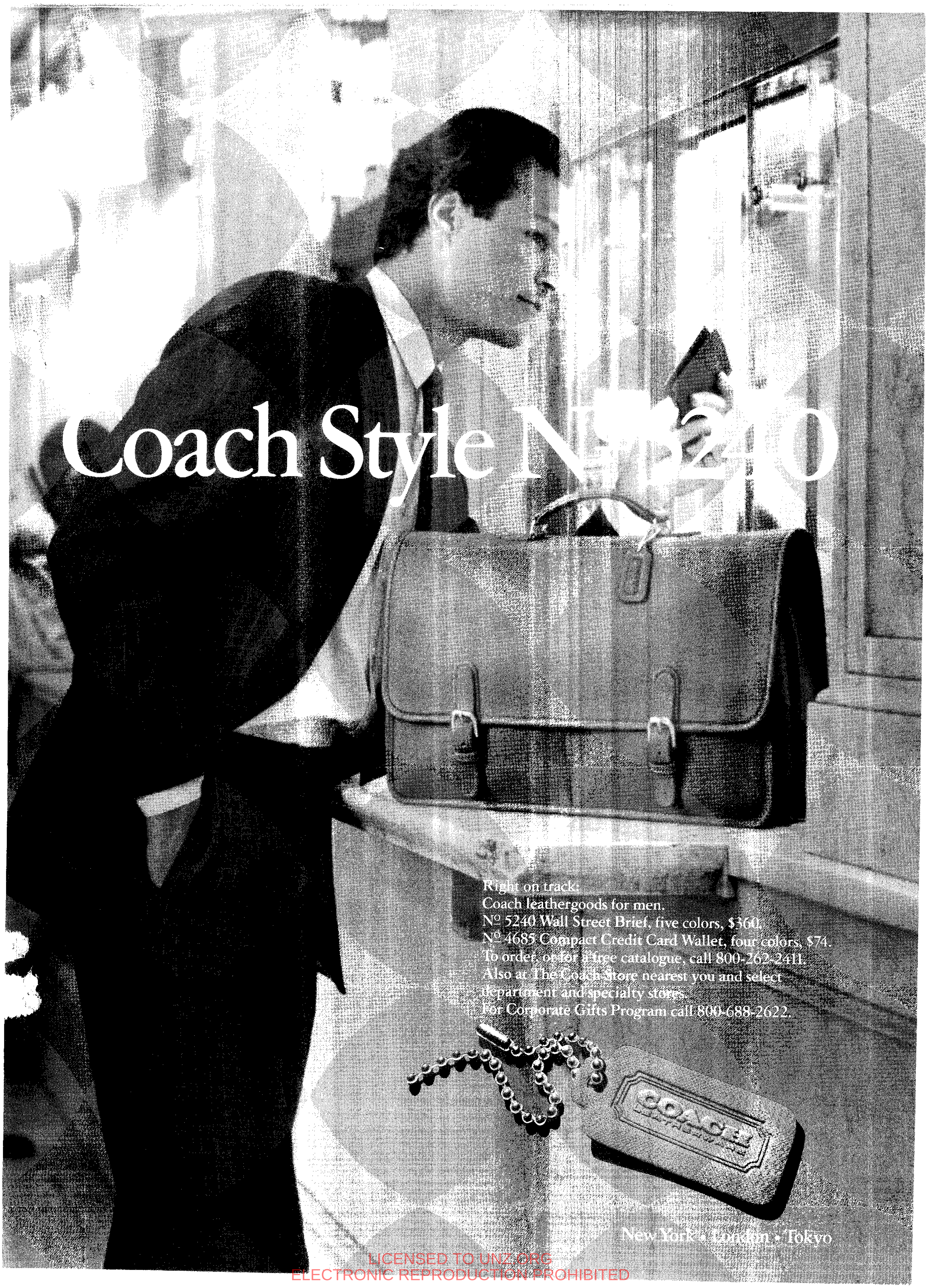
Ghost—It sounds like a horror movie, but it's a romantic fairy tale. The scariest thing about it is its shamelessness. A young New York bank executive, Sam (Patrick Swayze), is killed, on the street, at a moment in his life when everything seems to be going his way. After his death, Sam sticks around, as a spirit (and Swayze stays onscreen, as a body). He attends his funeral; watches his beautiful girlfriend, Molly (Demi Moore), drift grief-stricken through the spectacular loft they had just moved into; and then devotes himself to protecting her from the people who killed him. Through a reluctant psychic (Whoopi Goldberg), he tries to communicate with Molly; later, an experienced ghost (Vincent Schiavelli) teaches him how to move objects and break stuff. In this movie, death is treated as if it were merely a form of disability, one of those handicaps we've seen people struggle bravely with in TV movies—something for the individual to triumph over with will power, hard work, and love. This creamy-toned fantasy, directed by Jerry Zucker from a screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, certainly pushes the audience's emotional buttons. It's a twentysomething hybrid of "It's a Wonderful Life" and some of the goofier, more solemn episodes of "The Twilight Zone," and there's not a trace of wit or irony in it. Its images of death have a soothing banality, like a greeting-card message from the world beyond. Also with Tony Goldwyn and Rick Aviles.—T.R. (7/30/90) (Angelika Film Center, Loews 34th Street Showplace, 23rd St. West Triplex, Loews Festival, and Embassy.)

GoodFellas—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book "Wiseguy," it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks' "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura: the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come through, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Sutton, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through Dec. 6, evenings only. . . . ¶ Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Dec. 6. . . . ¶ Museum of Modern Art; Dec. 6.)

The Grifters—This adaptation of one of the punchier pulp novels by Jim Thompson retains Thompson's hardboiled pitilessness. It's about three scam artists: tough, seductive Lilly (Anjelica Huston); her son, Roy (John Cusack), who won't have anything to do with her; and his bubbly bedmate, Moira (Annette Bening), a sex fantasy come to luscious life. These chiselers never got a break and don't give anybody else a break. The director, Stephen Frears, and the scriptwriter, Donald E. Westlake, are smart enough not to attempt to make a big thing out of this L.A. film noir. They keep it snappy, and heighten the sexual electricity. And they smack us with discord: we're watching a form of cabaret. Huston is astounding; you can see why the son is getting even with her by throwing his life away, and Bening's two-faced little-girl quality is just what film noir thrives on. (This is a picture with two competing femmes fatales.) It's thin stuff, but it's pretty terrific. (It even has great opening titles.) With Pat Hingle giving the performance of his life, and Gailard Sartain, Stephen Tobolowsky, J. T. Walsh, Henry Jones, Charles Napier, and Sandy Baron. Cinematography by Oliver Stapleton; production design by Dennis Charles Gassner.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Beekman; Dec. 5-11.)

Henry & June—Philip Kaufman's wonderful new film shows us the writers Henry Miller (Fred Ward) and Anaïs Nin (Maria de Medeiros) in the first year of their acquaintance, the period of their brief, intense love affair. It's the love story of two people who are making themselves, and each other, up as they go along; Miller and Nin are at once real people and the products of their own imaginations—collaborators in a matched pair of literary myths. And the action unfolds in and around a city that seems both itself and a figment of itself: the Paris of the thirties. Kaufman brings out the bizarre, almost monstrous comedy of their odd literary/sexual love affair; he presents it as a kind of parody image of relationships between men and women. The third major character, Miller's wife, June (Uma Thurman), is the most mysterious presence here. She seems to represent a demonic, annihilating sexual force, but by the end she's almost a tragic figure. The actors are splendid: Kaufman gets miraculously intelligent performances from Ward and de Medeiros, and Thurman—uninhibited yet also weirdly delicate—gives the picture a jolt every time she appears. The movie creates a world, and Kaufman is both affectionate toward and clear-eyed about the people who live in it; he's concerned more with *enjoying* his characters, in all their contradictions, than with explaining them. The material plays as rich, dark erotic farce—a comedy about the duplicity of writers.—T.R. (10/8/90) (Baronet, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

The Krays—The twins Ronnie and Reggie Kray, a pair of East End thugs who operated several posh night clubs in London in the



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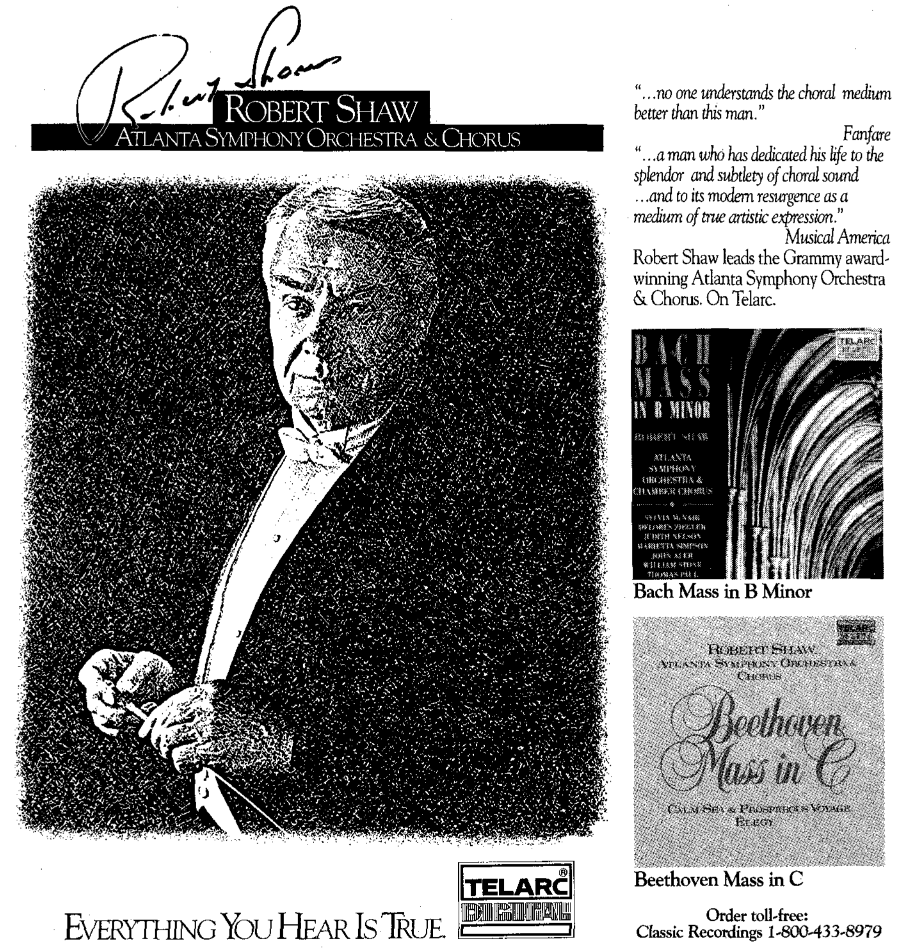
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nineteen-sixties, are underworld legends for the English. Most Americans don't know much about them; and after two hours of watching this picture, we still don't. The director, Peter Medak, and the screenwriter, Philip Ridley, take an arty, elliptical approach to what should be superbly tawdry gangster-movie material. The filmmakers walk up to us with big, mean-looking metaphors in their hands, and open fire. The Krays (played by Gary and Martin Kemp, who are brothers but not twins) wander through the movie looking sinister and rather dazed, as if they had forgotten who they were supposed to be. And who can blame them? They spend most of their time gazing into mirrors and telling each other their dreams; they're so burdened with meaning they seem unable to *do* anything. The bizarre, dreamlike tone might have worked—sort of—if the ideas in the script weren't so dopey. The picture advances, for instance, the remarkable theory that the Krays' sociopathic natures were created by the Blitz and an excess of love from their mother. That's the sort of thing Medak and Ridley give us in lieu [illegible] information, action, narrative; it won't do. Also with Billie Whitelaw as the twins' mother, Violet Kray. She's a wonderful actress; she no more deserves this movie than Vi deserved her terrible sons.—T.R. (Waverly, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Beekman; through Dec. 4.)

The Long Voyage Home (1940)—One of the finest of all the movies that deal with life at sea, and one of the most successful of all attempts to put Eugene O'Neill on film—perhaps because the director, John Ford, and the adaptor, Dudley Nichols, were so free in their approach to O'Neill's material. The young Mildred Natwick has a memorable scene in a café with John Wayne, and Barry Fitzgerald's return to the ship (shrunken and chastened) is a truly great moment. Gregg Toland did the cinematography (which includes some early experiments in deep focus); with Thomas Mitchell, Wilfrid Lawson, Ward Bond, John Qualen, and Joe Sawyer.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Dec. 11-12.)

Miracle in Milan (1951)—Part social satire, part fantasy, this Vittorio De Sica film suggests a childlike view of Dostoyevski's "The Idiot." A fun-loving old lady finds a newborn baby in a cabbage patch. The baby becomes Toto the Good, the happy man who loves everyone; when he is frustrated in his desire to help people, the old lady, now an angel, comes down and gives him the power to work miracles. Toto the hero, naïve and full of love, organizes a hobo shantytown into an ideal community, but the social contradictions are ludicrously hopeless—not even magic powers can resolve them. The failure of innocence here is touchingly absurd; the film is stylized poetry, and it is like nothing else that De Sica ever did. Francesco Golissano is perfect as Toto; the heroine, Brunella Bovo, is what Chaplin's heroines should have been but weren't. The film provides a beautiful role for that great, almost legendary lady of the Italian theatre, Emma Gramatica (many, many years before, she had taken over Duse's roles and acted under the direction of D'Annunzio); as the supremely silly old woman of De Sica's fairy tale, she is as yielding and permissive as his Umberto D. is proud and stubborn. With Paolo Stoppa as the unhappy man. Cesare Zavattini adapted his own novel, "Toto Il Buono." In Italian.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 10.)

Mr. & Mrs. Bridge—An adaptation, by the Merchant Ivory team (the director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant, and the writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), of Evan S. Connell's novels about the painfully respectable Bridge family of Kansas City. Walter and India Bridge (Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward) are pure exemplars of the middle: they're middle-aged and middle-class; they live in a medium-sized city in virtually the dead center of the United States; and they are neither truly happy nor consciously unhappy. They're monsters of moderation. At the beginning of the film, Ivory seems eerily in tune with the novels' distinctive sensibility: the domestic vignettes are sharply dramatized and succeed each other with an even, confident rhythm; the nuances of behavior, language, and décor register and then resonate satisfyingly; the tone is exactly right, cool but not condescending. The picture gets by, initially, on its strange mood of

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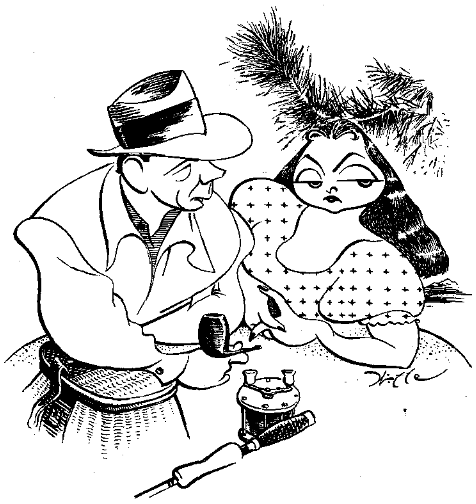
chilling coziness, and when we tire of that—and we do, because it doesn't change or develop—the actors keep us engaged a while longer. Newman doesn't try to soften the character, or to distance himself from it with exaggerated effects, and his scrupulousness pays off. The character seems not more likable but more human than it does in the novels: by very simple means, Newman enables us to understand Mr. Bridge's insensitivity and emotional ineptitude. And Woodward, too, gives a delicate, subtle performance: she embodies a foolish woman vividly and unpatronizingly. But the screenplay retains the static quality of the books' construction, so at a certain point the scenes begin to feel arbitrary. And Ivory's perspective on the material seems to become clouded by a storm of minutiae—a surfeit of period detail. (The action takes place in the late thirties and early forties.) In the end, the Bridges aren't large enough either to move us or to terrify us: they're the Ambersons without the magnificence. Also with Blythe Danner, Kyra Sedgwick, Robert Sean Leonard, Margaret Welsh, and Simon Callow.—T.R. (12/3/90) (Cinema I.)



At Theatre 80 St. Marks, Joseph Cotten and Bette Davis in "Beyond the Forest"

Reversal of Fortune—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his super-rich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved. The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny von Bülow, the comatose narrator).—P.K. (11/19/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, 68th Street Playhouse, 8th St. Playhouse, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ 57th St. Playhouse; through Dec. 11.)

To Sleep with Anger—A domestic comedy with an unusually dense texture. It's shot straightforwardly, in a style that appears realistic almost to the point of banality, and yet right from the start there's something unsettling about its plainness: Charles Burnett, who wrote and directed, keeps hinting that things are not necessarily what they seem. Gideon (Paul Butler) and Suzie (Mary Alice) are a middle-aged black couple who live in Los Angeles; their roots, however, are in the rural South, and they've retained quite a few of the customs, values, and superstitions of the culture they were brought up in. The story gets going when a friend of theirs from back home appears on their doorstep; they invite him to stay with them awhile, and he does. This unexpected guest, Harry (Danny Glover), turns out to be a gifted confidence man, with a sharp eye for human weakness; he's a grinning, honey-tongued demon. He uses his backcountry wisdom with sinister, obscure intent, for purposes that Burnett, cunningly, allows to remain ambiguous. The presence of Harry gives the realistic surface of the movie a vibrant strangeness: he seems to transform everything that happens in these clean, comfortable living rooms and kitchens into dark rituals performed in the woods in the dead of night. The picture has a risky, complex tone: it's a comedy, because the family's threatened world is set right in the end, but there are moments along the way when the intimations of unseen controlling forces—both in Glover's elegantly suggestive performance and in the eerie, calm precision of Burnett's direction—give us the creeps.—T.R. (11/5/90) (Angelika Film Center.)

Tune in Tomorrow . . .—The romantic, surreal farce material is William Boyd's adaptation of Mario Vargas Llosa's "Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter." The director, Jon Amiel, seems to like it so much that he gets carried away just watching the actors. He doesn't set up the jokes, and the movie is a mess, but it's a whimsical, pleasant mess: luckily, we like to watch these people, too. At the center, Peter Falk is the carelessly demented radio-serial writer who interferes in people's lives for the sake of his soapy art. The idea seems to be that the scriptwriter puts real life into soap opera and then the real people imitate soap opera—or something like that. Falk brings a delirium to his role—he fuses high and low comedy. There are amusing bits with radio actors whose faces and voices don't mesh; there are also some neat parodies of the radio listeners' fantasies. The cast includes Keanu Reeves with slicked-down hair and Barbara Hershey chewing gum (as hot-blooded lovers), and Peter Gallagher, Elizabeth McGovern, John Larroquette, Richard B. Shull, Henry Gibson, Dan Hedaya, Buck Henry, Hope Lange, and Irving Metzman.—P.K. (Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3, and West Side Cinemas.)

Vincent & Theo—The director, Robert Altman, and the screenwriter, Julian Mitchell, give us an interpretation of the bond that helps to keep Vincent alive while it tears Theo apart. Vincent is obsessive about his painting; Theo is obsessive about Vincent and about his own inability to sell Vincent's work and help him—he can give him only a pittance. This double Passion-play movie is very different from the other Altman movies (even allowing for how different they are from each other). The theme—the bitter entanglement of art and commerce—is Altman's lifelong theme, and, staying with it strictly in terms of the van Gogh brothers, he's able to release his own feelings about how an artist's frustrations lead him to acts of self-destructive fury—cutting off his ear to spite his face. It's a movie about two sensualists made by a sensualist, who understands that their bond of love of art is also a bond of shared rage at the world of commerce. This daring film works on its own relentless, celebratory terms. With Tim Roth, whose acting is a form of kinetic discharge, as Vincent and Paul Rhys as Theo.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Loews Fine Arts.)

The Westerner (1940)—There are agreeable overtones of Mark Twain tall tales in this good-humored, though uneven, version of the paradoxical life of Judge Roy Bean, with Walter Brennan in the part. The hero, Gary Cooper, a travelling saddle bum, delays being hanged by the Judge (on a false charge of horse thieving) by spinning a yarn about his close friendship with Lily Langtry (the Judge's obsession). The handsome production was directed by William Wyler. With Fred Stone, Doris Davenport, Dana Andrews, Lilian Bond (as Langtry), Chill Wills, Forrest Tucker, Paul Hurst, and Tom Tyler. Script by Jo Swerling and Niven Busch, from a story by Stuart N. Lake.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Dec. 6-8.)

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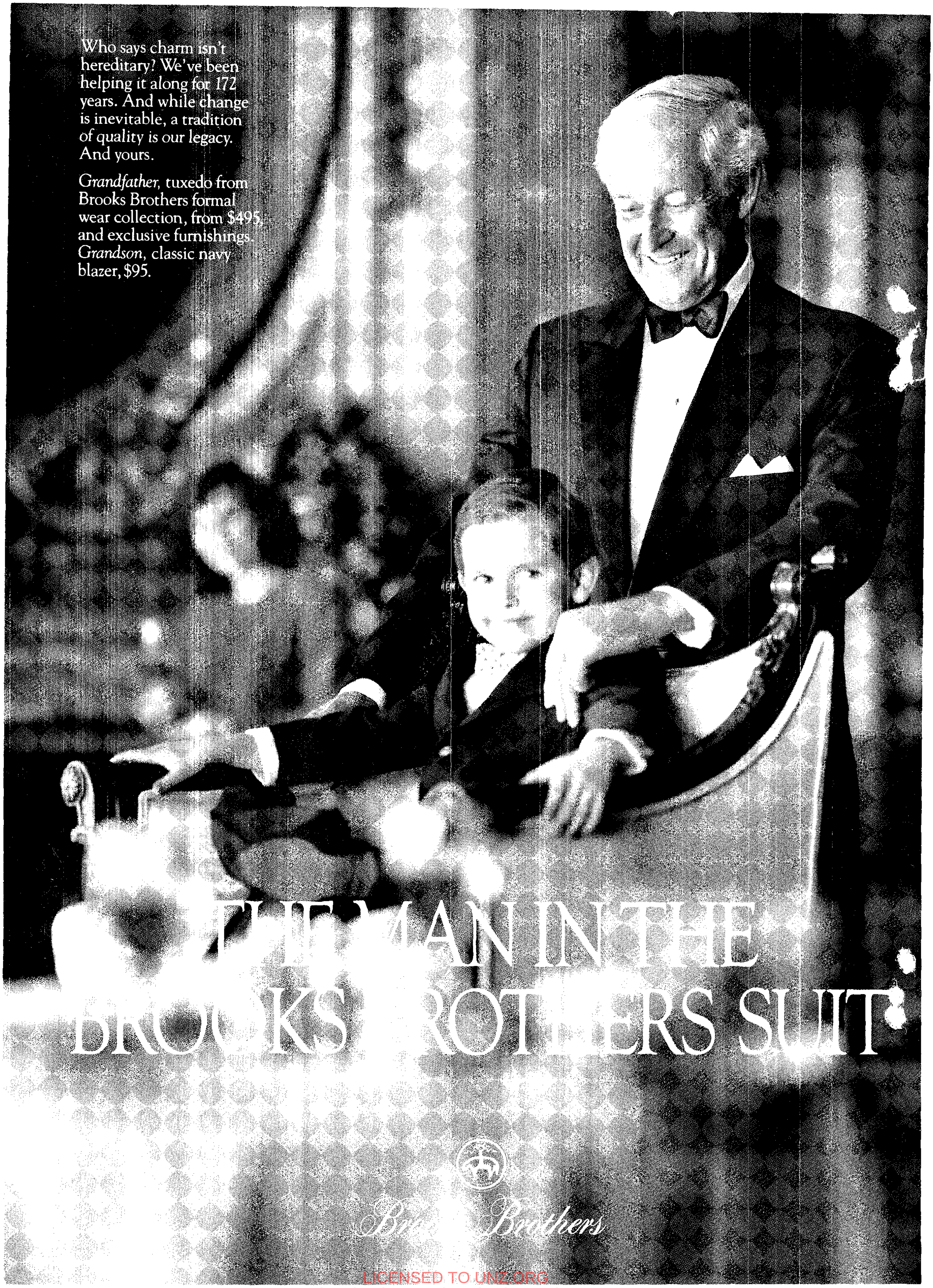

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THE NEW YORKER

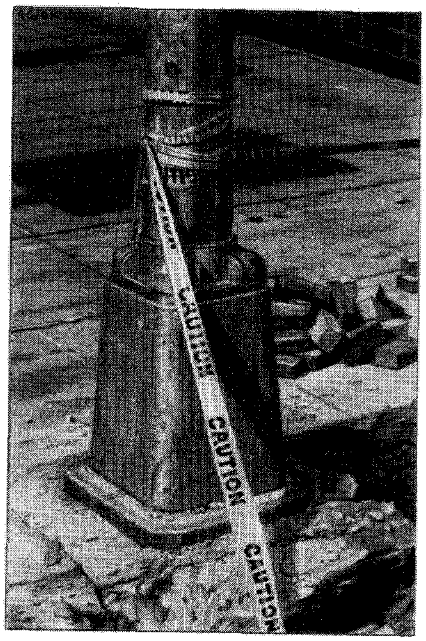
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

FOR almost four months, the United States has been sleepwalking toward war. Though there are the trappings of a debate—hearings in Congress, argument and speculation on the editorial pages, discussion on the public-affairs programs—thus far they have seemed insubstantial when set against the reality of President Bush's military buildup. Since early August, the Administration has pushed inexorably forward, assembling a vast American Army in the Saudi Arabian desert and bringing it steadily closer to combat. Not until early November, when the President's decision to send two hundred thousand additional troops made war seem suddenly more real, did the American people and their representatives in Congress, like drugged patients struggling to shake off sleep, begin to raise objections. Weren't the troops there to protect Saudi Arabia? By sending so many more, hadn't the Administration made it difficult to maintain the Army over the months it would take for sanctions to work? The Administration's response to these and other questions has done little to encourage the sort of vigorous debate that should precede the decision of a democracy to go to war; rather, President Bush and his aides have been doing their utmost to put the patients back to sleep.

From the beginning, President Bush's policy in the Gulf—recently described by Brent Scowcroft, the national-security adviser, as an effort to avoid war by confronting Saddam Hussein with "the prospect of war"—was better suited to a dictatorship than to a democracy. For the policy to have a chance of working, the United States had to show itself absolutely determined to go to war if Hussein did not unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait. The President, preoccupied with showing such resolution himself as he spent his days conferring with world leaders, seemed to take it for granted that the American people would follow along. Indeed, he has often appeared eager to avoid any debate whatever, seeking to calm Americans by telling them that he hasn't made up his mind, while at the same time building up United States forces and threatening Iraq with attack.

As opinion polls have shown Americans growing steadily more skeptical about the President's course, he has made increasingly impatient, and even irritated, attempts to rally them—or, rather, to quiet them. Though some critics complain that the President has not "made the case" for war, he has in fact made too many cases, like a salesman trying ever more farfetched pitches to sell a product that unaccountably won't move off the shelves. In August, he warned that the invasion of Kuwait put the American "way of life" at risk; in October, having apparently concluded that the economic argument might not convince enough Americans, he began emphasizing the need to confront "naked aggression." When his November decision to send the additional troops was greeted with criticism, he changed tack again. "Every day that passes brings Saddam Hussein one step closer to realizing his goal of a nuclear-weapons arsenal," he told the troops on Thanksgiving. "And that's why, more and more, your mission is marked by a real sense of urgency." No evidence was offered for this newly heightened "urgency," however, and most experts still contend, as they have from the beginning of the crisis, that Iraq would need at the very least a year, and more likely five or ten years, to produce a usable nuclear device. What *had* changed, it soon became evident, was the market research: two days before Mr. Bush's speech, the *Times* had published a poll suggesting that the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iraq was what now most worried Americans.



Disturbing though it is to see our President market war like a breakfast cereal, the implications of Mr. Bush's behavior for democratic government are more disturbing still. After several prominent senators publicly questioned the President's decision to nearly double the number of American troops in the Gulf without consulting Congress, he confronted them with excerpts from Iraqi newspapers quoting their remarks, and charged that by speaking out the senators had undermined his policy. The details of that meeting were immediately leaked, apparently with the aim of conveying the message that elected officials who dared to speak out against war could be publicly branded as willing to give aid and comfort to the enemy. And by maintaining that he had still not made up his mind whether or not to go to war, the President managed to blunt an attempt by Congress to organize a special session to debate a declaration of war. Congress, apparently relieved to be able to avoid debating what Representative Les Aspin called "hypothetical situations," decided that it would just hold hearings.

However welcome the hearings, Congress's retreat allowed the President to push forward with actions—deploying the additional two hundred thousand troops and securing a United Nations ultimatum that Iraq must relinquish Kuwait by January 15th—that have severely circumscribed this country's options: not only will it be extremely difficult to maintain such a huge force long enough for sanctions to accomplish their purpose but if the U.N. deadline that the Administration worked so hard for comes and goes and the United States does not attack Iraq, its inaction will be widely perceived as a miserable retreat.

Now, after rendering the sanctions policy difficult, if not impossible, to maintain, the President apparently hopes to confront Congress with a fait accompli. While making his perfunctory attempts to build domestic support, he was intensively lobbying the Security Council, and he clearly plans to use his hard-won resolution to pressure the members of Congress. A senior White House official told the Washington *Post*, "It would be hard for them to say they won't go along with what the international community agrees is needed." (Of course, for all the talk of a "coalition," no member of the "international community" has deployed more than a small fraction of the men and arms the United States now has in the Gulf.) Mr. Bush has just recently promised to "consult the extra mile" with Congress, declaring himself "ready" for Congress to "endorse what the President of the United States has done and what the United Nations Security Council has done." But he also says, "What I don't want to do is have it come back and end up where you have four hundred thirty-five voices in one house and a hundred in the other saying what *not* to do, and saying kind of a hand-wringing operation that would send bad signals."

Having demanded that Congress either endorse his actions or keep quiet, Mr. Bush announced that he was sending Secretary of State Baker to see Saddam Hussein—not to negotiate but "to make sure he understands the commitment of the United States," and he added, "There can be no face-saving." By emphasizing the nuclear issue and bluntly stating that "the status quo ante will not be enough," the President has implied that it might not be possible to forestall war even if Hussein withdraws unconditionally from Kuwait—a step that many analysts believe would cost him his rule, and perhaps his life. Meanwhile, Hussein has given no sign of backing down. According to the *Times*, the Hussein government is stepping up its "efforts to raise the cost in casualties of any attack on its armed forces . . . by fielding a numerically superior army whose total defeat can be accomplished only through a punishing and unpredictable conflict." He undoubtedly believes, as he told the American Ambassador a few days before invading Kuwait, that America is "a society that cannot accept ten thousand dead in one battle."

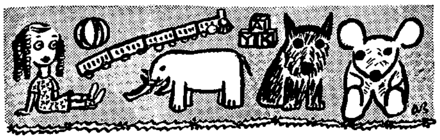
The difficulty for President Bush is that in this instance Hussein is probably right. From the beginning, the Iraqi leader has recognized what the President has willfully ignored—that lack of domestic support is his greatest weakness. Americans, whatever their fears concerning the price of oil or the danger of nuclear weapons, have given no sign that they are ready to support a bloody war to free Kuwait. But the President has declared, "This will not be another Vietnam. I will never ever agree to a halfway effort." It's ironic and worrying to hear him invoking that episode in America's history at the very moment when he is trying to ignore the country's growing division over his policy in the Gulf. As war appears to draw closer, the voices of opposition are sure to grow louder. The President may well criticize the dissent, declaring, with some reason, that it weakens his position. The problem, however, lies not with the dissent but with a policy that unwisely counted on its absence and now deplores its existence.

* * *

Underground

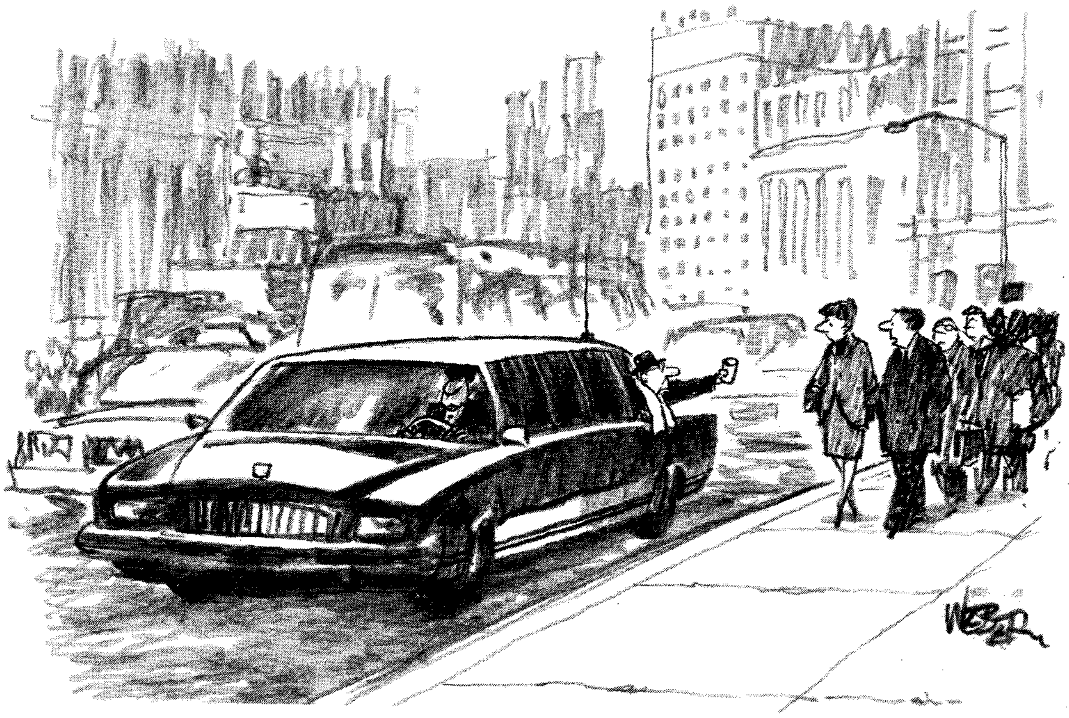
A FRIEND visiting in Czechoslovakia writes:

The Totalitarian Zone, or T.Z., is today's name for a seventy-two-hundred-square-yard series of underground vaults beneath what used to be the Stalin Monument, overlooking the Vltava River in Prague. A few weeks ago, when I ended up there at two in the morning, it looked like an eerie, smoke-filled catacomb out of "A Clockwork Orange." "It's the hottest ticket in town!" said John Allison, who recently quit his post with American Booksellers, in New York, to come and teach English in Prague. He was shouting above the noise of a heavy metal band called Cosmic Wurst, which was bombarding some two thousand old and nouveaux hippies crammed inside.



In the early sixties, when Stalin fell from ideological grace, the monument was blown up and some of its remains were stashed in the bunker below. The area remained unused until mid-October, when Prague's Society for the Development of Social Life and an organization called the Linhart Foundation—an arts-support group that was semi-clandestine in Communist days but now has an office, a fax machine, and an enthusiastic young staff—decided to hold an arts festival there. The idea was to create a pan-European event, and a call went out to conventional artists, performance artists, graffiti artists—artists with and without portfolio—to come and make art in the "ironic" space under the Stalin monument, which had been rented from the Czech government and was to be opened to public view for the first time. Hundreds accepted. Housing was provided for them in a rambling palace, near Malostranska Square, that had once been the headquarters of the Gestapo. Breakfast and dinner were thrown in, but artists had to buy their own beer and cigarettes.

The festival, which was also called the Totalitarian Zone, lasted for four days. Contingents arrived from Italy, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Turkey, Poland, Romania, and ten other countries. A Parisian group showed up with forty people instead of the allotted fifteen, and when the extras were rejected they became "very aggressive," in the words of the Czech organizers, and began to spray-paint their objections, graffiti-style, on the T.Z.'s walls. Some of them dug in, squatting sulkily at the T.Z., while over at the Gestapo palace a meeting was called to discuss "the French problem." A British woman demanded of the Parisians, "Is the



"Looks like we're really sliding into a recession."

• •

graffiti what you consider collaboration?" A French spokesman identified only as Marcel, unflustered by the question, replied that graffiti artists make graffiti—that's what they *do*. Someone asked if making people nervous was also what graffiti artists do, and Marcel's answer was, basically, yes.

Literature was represented at the T.Z. by Susan Sontag and the prominent Czech writers Ludvík Vaculík and Bohumil Hrabal, among others, and film by Glenda Jackson, Jim Jarmusch, and Julie Christie. There were jazz and rock groups with names like Assassins, FFF, Nox, and Burial Party, and d.j.s included Charlie de Hongrie, from France, and Princess Christina, from the States. The most popular performance artist, hands down, was America's Garry Thomas, of Vermont, better known as the Bubble Man, who stood on a perch and created giant, undulating soap-bubble patterns over the heads of all. "More bubbles, less troubles" is Thomas's motto.

Of some fifty physical works of art in the T.Z., three caused a particular stir: a gargantuan skull and crossbones, ten feet high, sitting on a huge pile of blown-up concrete; a twenty-five-foot vertical checkerboard with black tanks on yellow squares and mangled books on black squares, and with an ominous pair of polished bronze boots in front of it and Czech and Soviet flags flying above; and a quasi-pornographic photo exhibit called "Happening and Living Art from Riga, Latvia, 1987-1990," which made Mapplethorpe look tame and would never play in Cincinnati.

One afternoon, I took a cab to Karlův Most—the Charles Bridge over the Vltava—which is the spiritual as well as the architectural symbol of Prague and is arguably the most graceful and most evocative span in Europe. At its center, a souvenir vender was doing a brisk tourist business in some peculiar antiques—the hammer-and-sickle insignias of Red Army issue. Yesterday's political detritus is today's collectors' item, and Soviet soldiers have been selling off their caps and uniforms, or bits and pieces of them, to street dealers.

Czechs regard Russian domination as so much a thing of the past that, back at the Totalitarian Zone, there was almost a sense of regret that the old dictator couldn't be present to see this nihilist decadence sprouting up right there beneath his clay feet—he who never allowed culture, let alone the counter-culture, to flourish anywhere.

Smugness, however, is tempered by an unnerving metaphor. Three days before the festival opened, the chief engineer of the Stalin-monument-demolition project paid a nostalgic visit to the Totalitarian Zone. While he was looking around, he mentioned to the organizers, rather casually, that when the first attempt to blow up Stalin didn't work they had brought in a second round of blasting devices to finish the job. The monument collapsed on top of the first, undetonated batch. Stalin's rubble contains live explosives.

Ecclesiastica

RONALD RAINEY prepares a visitor for his collection of ecclesiastical autographs the way a historian sets forth the principal causes of the Reformation. "First of all, I came from a very Catholic family," he says. "Irish. I was much more devout than anyone else in the family. In 1962, I was confirmed. John Kennedy was President, and Pope John had started the Vatican Council. He was this nice Italian smiling Pope. I took the name John. Then, I'm just unmistakably a collector—an acquisitor and accumulator. From the time I was a child, I had the idea that saving is better than throwing out."

A few footnotes follow: he spent a year in divinity school at Seton Hall University, and though he is no longer practicing, he considers himself "culturally Catholic"; he got his Ph.D. in history from Columbia University in 1985, having written an eight-hundred-page dissertation on sumptuary laws in Renaissance Florence; and he is now an associate director of General Studies at N.Y.U. and teaches one course per term, in European history. Then he resumes: "In 1962, I began a collection of autographs. I started out with famous people. I wrote to John Kennedy, Albert Schweitzer, Princess Grace of Monaco, Queen Elizabeth." In 1965, he wrote to Cardinal Spellman, and acquired his first ecclesiastical autograph. The collection then took an ecclesiastical turn, because the ecclesiastics were the ones who were writing back. "Once I started writing to bishops and cardinals, I started getting real letters, personal letters, signed by them—really nifty stuff," he says.

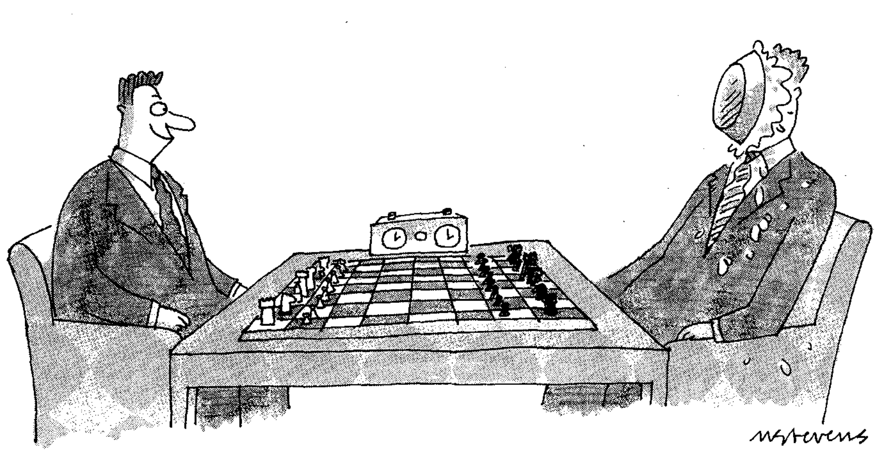
Today, Rainey, a man of thirty-nine, with thick graying hair and sharp blue eyes, has four thousand autographs, about half of them ecclesiastical, and he keeps them organized in three-ring binders. Besides eight volumes for royal and aristocratic families, the House of Lords, deposed monarchs, and pretenders to various thrones, he has separate volumes for the papacy, the Roman Curia, European bishops (two volumes, one reserved for Germans), American cardinals and bishops (five volumes, one devoted exclusively to New Jersey), the New York Archdiocese, Anglican and Protestant bishops, bishops of English-speaking countries outside the United States, Third World bishops, and bishops of Eastern Rite churches, both Orthodox (independent of the Pope) and Uniate (loyal to the Pope). This last volume contains everything from Copts, Armenians, Ruthenians, and Chaldeans to the Ukrainian Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma, Ohio.

In his standard ecclesiastical-autograph request, which he developed in the mid-sixties, Rainey introduces himself as a collector with an interest in church history, and invokes the names of selected cardinals and bishops already in his collection. Sometimes he uses ecclesiastical events as occasions for writing—remembering the Pope's birthday, say, or the tenth anniversary of the installation of an archbishop. Between the mid-sixties and the mid-seventies, he acquired the autographs of a whole generation of cardinals and bishops who took part in the Second Vatican Council. He has an autographed photo of William Theodore Cardinal Heard, a Scottish lawyer, in owlish black-framed glasses, who signs his name "Guglielmo Teodoro Heard." "*Gaudium et pax*" is the greeting of Pericle Cardinal Felici, secretary-general of the Vatican Council, who is known for having knocked a colleague down the steps of St. Peter's. A double-chinned Dino Cardinal Staffa, prefect during the early seventies of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura (the Supreme Court of the Church), is represented by a full-length portrait in a watered-silk biretta and peekaboo sleeves, with cameos on his pectoral cross. (Such lavish getups are seen less frequently now.) Giacomo Cardinal Lercaro, a socially active cardinal from Bologna, took the opportunity to press one of his own causes, writing, in Italian, "In return for sending you my autograph, please send me yours—more precious than mine—on a check for several thousand dollars."

Though most of the collection was acquired through correspondence, Rainey does occasionally buy things from dealers. He got an autograph of John Henry Cardinal Newman for only ten dollars. "Ecclesiastical stuff tends to be rather cheap," he says. His oldest autographed photo is a *carte de visite* from May, 1865, of John McCloskey, the second Archbishop of New York and the first American to be made a cardinal—by Pius IX, in 1875. He has five Spellmans, three Cookes, and three O'Connors, most acquired through correspondence. Though he still writes an occasional letter of request, he says that these days he's more interested in collecting postcards. His latest acquisition is a silk postcard of Désiré-Joseph Cardinal Mercier, the primate of Belgium during the First World War, for which he paid thirty dollars—"the most I've ever paid for a postcard."

Then, there are some oversized items, like a poster of Pope Paul VI, and some three-dimensional objects sent by papal nuncios as mementos of places the Pope has visited, like papal key chains from Korea, Tokyo, and Denmark, and, from San Antonio, Texas, a lapel pin with the Pope's face superimposed on a map of Texas. "I'm also a bit of bibliophile," Rainey admits. He opens a calfskin box shaped like a book and takes out a facsimile of a fifteenth-century Flemish Book of Hours. It cost two hundred and fifty dollars. He also has a first edition of a rare book published in 1916, which he picked up at a seminary in New Jersey. "The hierarchy in New York has always been overwhelmingly Irish," Rainey says. "All eight Archbishops of New York have been Irish. Between 1880 and 1915, though, there was a wave of Italian immigrants, and a million Italians settled in New York." He hands over the book, by Joseph McSorley, with an introduction by John Cardinal Farley. Its title is "Italian Confessions: How to Hear Them."

ANNALS OF CHESS



THE CONTROVERSIAL "SOUPY SALES" OPENING

Hunter

WE spoke on the phone the other day with a friend out West who had recently returned from his first hunting trip. Here is a transcript:

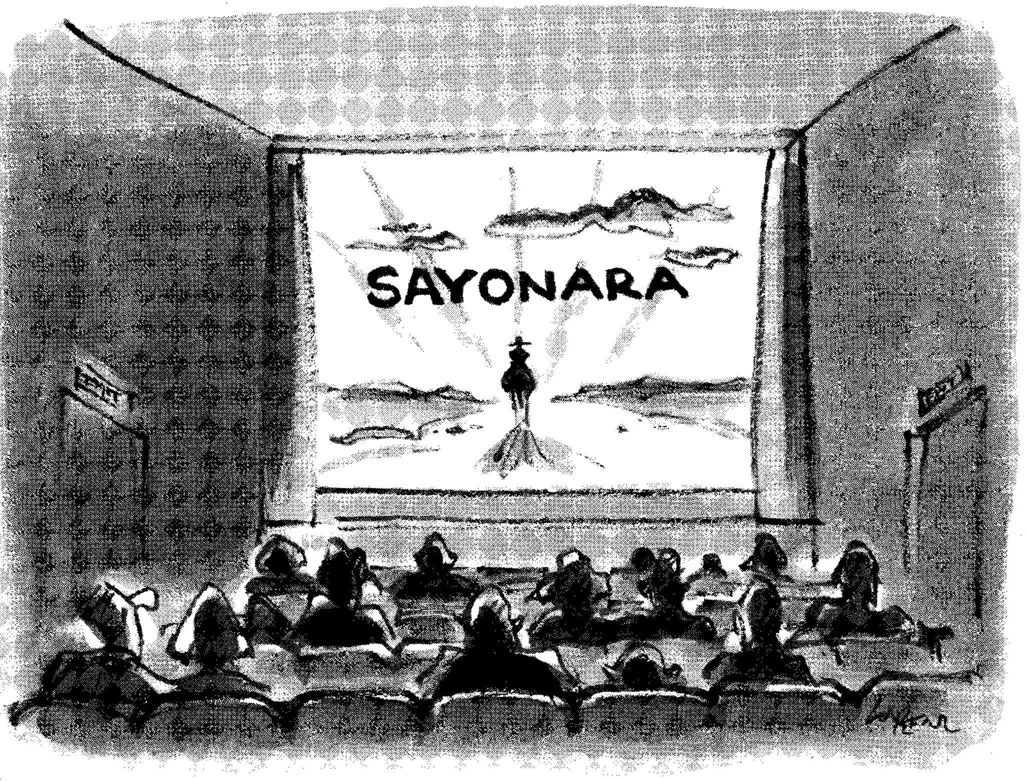
I don't get out much—almost never beyond cable access—but I outdid myself this time: seven of us canoed forty-odd miles down the Missouri River in five days. Except for a few other hunting parties, everything alive was below us on the food chain.

Such as?

Jackrabbits, Hungarian partridges, ring-necked pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse, common mergansers, hooded mergansers, mallards, goldeneyes, great blue herons, grebes, Canadian geese, wild turkeys, mule deer, white-tailed deer, swans, gulls, coyotes, carp so big they breached, pronghorn antelope, beaver, raccoons, freshwater mussels, crickets, blue jays, one woodpecker upside down on a cottonwood branch, one rattling rattler, cliff swallows, sage grouse, bald eagles, golden eagles, owls, marsh hawks, and red-tailed hawks. That about covers it, except for former life—ammonites, mussel shells, a buffalo skull.

Isn't this a little late in the year for rattlesnakes?

That's why I was crashing around in tennis shoes. But it was about sixty-five degrees, and the snake probably figured he'd catch a last few hours of sun—it might not get that warm again until May. I was half a mile from camp when something rustled in the sagebrush. I froze, and looked down and to my left, and there he was, a body-length away, shaking his tail with that seeds-in-a-dry-gourd sound that makes you sick with dread when you realize what you're hearing. We were a long day away from any help, and the only medicine I had with me was some Alka-Seltzer, a bottle of aspirin, and a few Demerol—in case someone winged me out there in the wilds. I froze. He stopped rattling. I stepped backward. He started rattling again. I froze again. Counted to three, three again, then to ten, and lit out of there like a scalded ape.



How big was he?

From where I was standing, I'd say just under twenty-seven feet long.

Any other adventures?

Only when Hutch mistook some Huberd's Shoe Grease for cooking oil.

Good food?

Damn! Steak, baked potatoes, pheasant chow mein, sausage and eggs, pancakes, salami sandwiches thick as Great Books, lamb stew, spaghetti, candy bars, apples, bananas, liver and onions with bacon, licorice, chili and hot dogs, homemade cookies, limeade, coffee. The best meal was lunch the second day—pheasant drumsticks and beer as we drifted with the current just this side of Eagle Creek, all of us in shirtsleeves, lying back under the warm sun, half asleep, caps low.

Artillery?

I don't hunt, but the others brought their smoke poles: a 30-30 lever-action Winchester; a 16-gauge shotgun; a .308 Winchester; a 12-gauge pump shotgun; a scope-sighted 7-mm. pistol; another 12-gauge; a couple of .270s, and one of them, its owner found, shot twelve inches high at two hundred yards; a .250 Savage; a 20-gauge shotgun; and an over-under 20-gauge. I tell you, I kept my orange vest on *all* the time, even one day when I took a bath in the river. Of course, there was always the possibility that, wearing that vest, I'd be mistaken for an avocet — that's a pink-headed wading bird.

Avocets couldn't be as big as humans.

I didn't want to be mistaken for a *trophy* avocet.

Bond much?

Dudes bond. We hunkered and talked calibre. We built fires. We took looks up draws and along ridges to see what we could see. We made camp. We broke camp. We loaded canoes. We paddled. We told jokes. We told lies. We told stories: how old Sorenson made camp one day, looked up, and saw the wind pick up his canoe and pitch it end over end a quarter mile down the river; what a .357 Magnum will do to a five-pound block of commodity cheese in someone's kitchen; how old Manley woke once and found a bear in his tent; how old Gadbow crashed a car into a tree while sparking with his wife on their first date. We had thoughts: about outfitters, who spend their lives keeping stock from bolting, and coddling parties of neurosurgeons from Connecticut; about beer taxation ("Don't Levy the Lager" was what we came up with); about Kevlar versus metal-skin canoes; about the relative taste of grain-fed and sage-fed deer. We asked the Big Questions: Is there life on other planets? Are the northern lights the result of ionized air or are they the reflections off the polar cap or are they the liver flukes of the gods? Are premoistened towelettes acceptable camp gear? We gazed: on igneous dikes, sandstone bands, lenses of low-grade coal surrounded by unconsolidated marine sediment, cap rocks, ridges, rock knuckles, rock teeth, rock ribs, walls, draws, reaches, drainages, mud balls, cut banks, islands, and sandbars. We shared chores. We got sun- and windburned. We slept deep, except Wednesday night.

What happened Wednesday night?

A B-1 bomber—possibly from Grand Forks or Rapid City—flew low over our heads in the middle of the night with a roar like the end of the world.

What did you do?

Woke all the way up. Swore. Listened to the animals: ducks quacking, owls hooting, coyotes howling, herons croaking, grebes yodelling, geese honking. We all—critters, humans—settled down after a while. That plane was the second-loudest sound on the trip.

What was the loudest?

My tentmate's snoring.

Is that hunter humor?

Yup.

THE BIRDS FOR CHRISTMAS

WE wanted "The Birds" for Christmas. We had seen the commercials for it on the television donated thirdhand by the Merchant Seamen's and Sailors' Rest Home, a big black-and-white Zenith of cracked plastic and no knobs, a dime stuck in the channel selector. You could adjust the picture and have no sound, or hi-fi sound and no picture. We just wanted the picture. We wanted to see "The Birds."

The Old Head Nurse said not to get our hopes up. It was a "Late Show" after Lights Out the night before Christmas Eve. She said it would wake the babies and scare the Little Boys down on the far end of the ward. Besides, she said, she didn't think it was the type of movie we should be seeing Christmas week. She said she was certain there would be Rudolph and Frosty on. That would be more appropriate for us to watch on the night before Christmas Eve.

"*Fuck* Frosty," Michael Christian said to me. "I seen that a *hunrett* times. I want to see 'The Birds,' man. I want to see those birds get all up *in* them people's hair. That's some real Christmas TV to me."

Michael Christian and I were some of the last Big Boys to be claimed for Christmas. We were certain *someone* would eventually come for us. We were not frightened yet. There were still some other Big Boys around—the Big Boy who ran away to a gas station every other night, the Human Skeleton who would bite you, and the guy locked away on the sun porch who the Young Doctors were taking apart an arm and a leg at a time.

The Young Doctors told Michael Christian that their Christmas gift to him would be that one day he would be able to do a split onstage like his idol, James Brown. There never seemed to be any doubt in Michael Christian's mind about that. For now, he just wanted to see "The Birds" while he pretended to be James Brown in the Hospital.

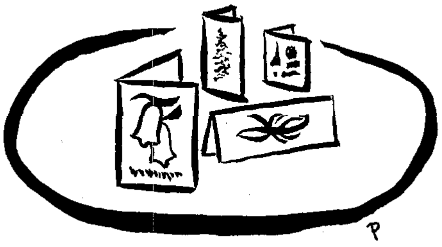
Pretending to be James Brown in the Hospital was not without its hazards for Michael Christian; he had to remember to keep his head lifted from his pillow so as not to *bedhead* his budding Afro. Once, when he was practicing his singing, the nurses rushed to his bed asking him where it hurt.

"I'm warming up 'I Feel Good,' stupid bitches," said Michael Christian. Then his bed was jerked from the wall and wheeled with great speed, pushed and pulled along by hissing nurses, jarring other bedsteads, Michael Christian's wrists hanging over the safety bedrails like jailhouse-window hands; he was on his way to spend a couple of solitary hours out in the long, dark, and empty hall, him rolling his eyes at me as he sped past, saying, "Aw, man, now I feel BAD!"

Bed wheeling into the hall was one of the few alternatives to corporal punishment the nurses had, most of them being reluctant to spank a child in traction for spitting an orange pip at his neighbor, or to beat a completely burned child for cursing. Bed wheeling into the hall was especially effective at Christmastime, when it carried the possibility of missing Christmas programs. A veteran of several Christmases in the hospital and well acquainted with the grim Christmas programs, Michael Christian scoffed at the treasures handed out by the church and state charities—the aging fruit, the surplus ballpoint pens, the occasional batches of recycled toys that didn't work, the games and puzzles with missing pieces. Michael Christian's Christmas Wish was as specific as mine. I wanted a miniature train set with batteries so I could lay out the track to run around on my bed over the covers. Not the big Lionel size or the HO size. I wanted the set you could see in magazines, where they show you the actual size of the railroad engine as being no larger than a walnut.

"You never get that, man," Michael Christian said, and he was right.

James Brown in the Hospital's Christmas Wish was for "The Birds" for Christmas. And, as Michael Christian's friend, I became an accomplice in his desire. In that way, "birds" became a code, the way words can among boys.



"Gimme some BIRDS!" Michael Christian would squawk when the society ladies on their annual Christmas visit asked us what we wanted.

"How about a nice hairbrush?" a society lady said, laying one for white people at the foot of Michael Christian's bed.

"I want a pick," Michael Christian told her.

"A pick? A shovel and a pick? To dig with?" asked the society lady.

"I think he wants a comb for his hair," I said. "For his Afro."

"That's right: a pick," said Michael Christian. "Tell this stupid white bitch something. *Squawk, squawk,*" he said, flapping his elbows like wings, as the nurses wheeled him out into the hall. "Gimme some BIRDS!" he shouted, and when they asked me, I said to give me some birds, too.

Michael Christian's boldness over the Christmas programs increased when Ben, the night porter, broke the television. Looking back, it may not be fair to say that Ben, the night porter, actually broke the television, but one evening it was soundlessly playing some kiddie Christmas show and Ben was standing near it mopping up a spilt urinal can when the screen and the hope of Michael Christian's getting his Christmas Wish blackened simultaneously. Apologetic at first, knowing what even a soundless television meant to children who had rarely seen any television at all, Ben then offered to "burn up your butt, Michael Christian, legs braces and all" when Michael Christian hissed "stupid nigger" at Ben, beneath the night nurse's hearing. It was a sombre Lights Out.

The next night, a priest and some students from the seminary came by. Practice Preachers, Michael Christian said. While one of the students read the Christmas story from the Bible, Michael Christian pretended to peck his own eyes out with pinched fingers. When the story was finished, Michael Christian said, "Now, you say the sheepherding guys was so afraid, right?"

"*Sore* afraid," said the Practice Preacher. "The shepherds had never seen angels before, and they were *sore* afraid."

"Naw," said Michael Christian. "I'll tell you what—they saw these big white things flapping down and they was big *birds*, man. I know *birds*, man, I know when you got bird *problems*, man!"

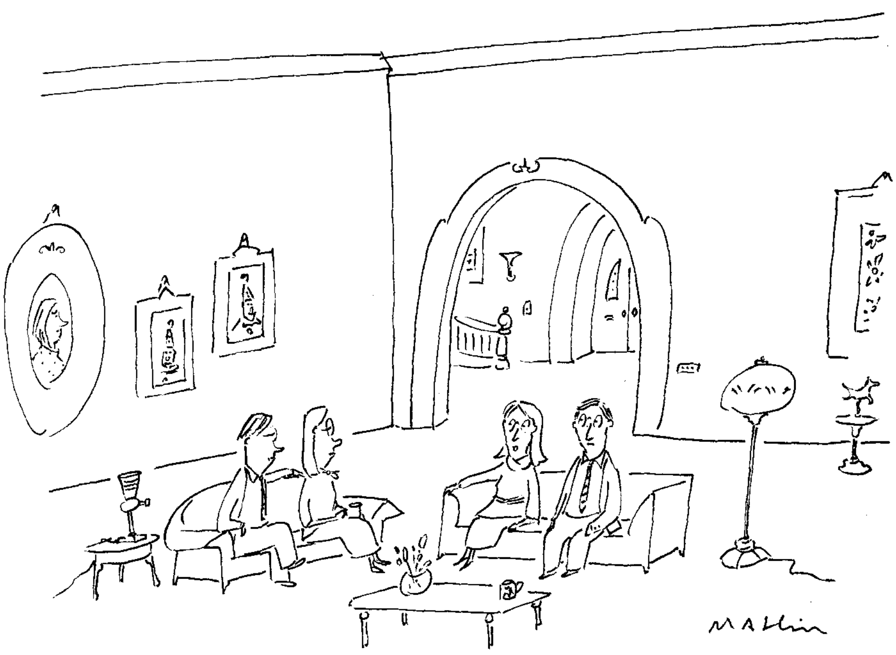
"They were *angels*," said the young seminary student.

"Naw," said Michael Christian. "They was big white birds, and the sheepherding guys were *so* afraid the big white birds was swooping down and getting all up in they *hair* and stuff! *Squawk, squawk!*" he said, flapping around in his bed.

"*Squawk, squawk!*" I answered, and two of the Practice Preachers assisted the nurses in wheeling Michael Christian into the hall and me into the linen cupboard.

One night in the week before Christmas, a man named Sammy came to visit. He had been a patient as a child, and his botched cleft-palate and harelip repairs were barely concealed by a weird line of blond mustache. Sammy owned a hauling company now, and he showed up blistering drunk, wearing a ratty Santa suit, and began handing out black-strapped Timex junior wristwatches. I still have mine, somewhere.

One by one we told Sammy what we wanted for Christmas, even though we were not sure, because of his speech defect, that that was what he was asking. Me, the walnut train; Michael Christian, "The Birds." We answered without enthusiasm, without hope: it was all by rote. By the end of the visit, Sammy was a blubbering sentimental mess, reeking of alcohol and promises. Ben, the night porter, put him out.



"*Our marriage is neither better nor worse since we switched to radial tires—it's just different.*"

IT was Christmas Eve week. The boy who kept running away finally ran away for good. Before he left, he snatched the dime from the channel selector on our broken TV. We all saw him do it and we didn't care. We didn't even yell out to the night nurse, so he could get a better head start than usual.

It was Christmas Eve week, and Michael Christian lay listless in his bed. We watched the Big Boy ward empty. Somebody even came for one of the moaners, and the guy out on the sun porch was sent upstairs for a final visit to the Young Doctors so they could finish taking him apart.

On the night before Christmas Eve, Michael Christian and I heard street shoes clicking down the long corridor that led to where we lay. It was after Lights Out. We watched and waited and waited. It was just Sammy the Santa, except this time he was wearing a pale-blue leisure suit, his hair was oiled back, and his hands, holding a red-wrapped box, were clean.

What we did not want for Christmas were wristwatches. What we did not want for Christmas were bars of soap. We did not want any more candy canes, bookmarks, ballpoint pens, or somebody else's last year's broken toy. For Christmas we did not want plastic crosses, dot books, or fruit baskets. No more handshakes, head pats, or storybook times. It was the night before Christmas Eve, and Michael Christian had not mentioned "The Birds" in days, and I had given up on the walnut train. We did not want any more Christmas Wishes.

Sammy spoke with the night nurse, we heard him plead that it was Christmas, and she said all right, and by her flashlight she brought him to us. In the yellow spread of her weak batteries, we watched Michael Christian unwrap a portable television.

There was nothing to be done except plug the television into the wall. It was Christmas, Sammy coaxed the reluctant night nurse. They put the little TV on a chair, and we watched the end of an Andy Williams Christmas Special. We watched the eleven-o'clock news. Then the movie began: "The Birds." It was Christmas, Sammy convinced the night nurse.

The night nurse wheeled her chair away from the chart table and rolled it to the television set. The volume was low, so as not to disturb the damaged babies at the Little Boy end of the ward—babies largely uncollected until after the holidays, if at all. Sammy sat on an empty bed. He patted it. Michael Christian and I watched "The Birds."

During the commercials, the night nurse checked the hall for the supervisor. Sammy helped her turn any infant that cried out. The night nurse let Sammy have some extra pillows. Michael Christian spoke to me only once during the entire movie: quietly, during a commercial when we were alone, he said, "Those birds messing them people *up*."

When the movie was over, it was the first hours of Christmas Eve. The night nurse woke Sammy and let him out through the sun porch. She told us to go to sleep, and rolled her chair back to her chart table. In the emptiness you could hear the metal charts click and scratch, her folds of white starch rustle. Through a hole in the pony blanket I had pulled over my head I could see Michael Christian's bed. His precious Afro head was buried deep beneath his pillow.

At the dark end of the ward a baby cried in its sleep and then was still.

It was Christmas Eve, and we were sore afraid.

—MARK RICHARD

NEAR FORT BLANCO

WITH the sun in her eyes, Mia can't see her father-in-law as he talks, but she can see the rim of his hat, which cuts into the clear blue South Texas sky like a rusted metal disk. Mr. H.—this is what Mia and her sister-in-law Nancy have always called him—is a long, angular man, taller than her own father, who hadn't worn hats, and taller, at this angle, than the sun. He stops in front of Mia, and she stares as fine, gleaming desert dust rises and falls on his brown wing-tip shoes. She shades her eyes, but still she cannot make out his features, which have been worked hard lately. His mother has just died in the only hospital around for miles. The family have flown in from various parts of the country, and have been staying at her house. After seeing Mr. H. in his own vast Greenwich living room, his lofty Aspen ski house, there is something touching about seeing him—a Texan turned Wall Street banker who collects Remington bronzes—here in his mother's small house, in rooms with flowered wallpaper, and candy dishes, not sculptures, on the tabletops. Mia steps off the cracked cemetery sidewalk after her husband, Paul, and her father-in-law. The funeral is in two days, and they have come to find the grave site. Her eyes fall on a faucet, bent over dry dirt like a thirsty bird.

Mr. H. looks around him. "Don't know why there are so many spigots when no one bothers to water this place. Jigaboos don't; I reckon they figure long as they can't be buried here, why should they."

He says this with no change in his voice, and Mia flinches, although she is not sure why hearing his bigotry in the place where it originated, where it is part of accepted thinking, should be more horrifying than hearing it anywhere else. She says nothing, but drops behind. She wonders if they will expect her, her children, to be buried in this place. If Nancy were here, they would joke about it. Paul's brother Brian and Nancy are separating, and thinking about this makes Mia sad.

"Come on," Paul says, suddenly beside her. "I think they've found it." He takes her hand and, following him, she decides the haircut she gave him before they left Chicago isn't bad. His curly hair is the darkest color on the desert. Has he ever thought of being buried here himself? Mia pictures the cemetery where her father is buried, in upstate New York, which is protected by scrolled iron grills, black and tall, and a gatehouse, where someone sits. Mia wouldn't mind eating her lunch there, where caretakers keep the grass very green, and rake up the confettilike petals of whatever is in season. Or in the place where her mother is, that quaint church with walls around it, here and there huge trees shading the gravestones, in Pennsylvania.

Hopping over a grave, Paul's brother reads her mind. "We'll find you a nice spot in the shade," he says, smiling. Brian stands close to Mia; he is stocky and blond, and she remembers that Nancy, wearing heels, was taller.

Mr. H. points here, then there. He is trying to decide whether his uncle's gravestone has slipped to the right, and, if it has, whether it matters. His hat is off now. The family names stare up at Mia in granite. All curves and sharp edges, they sparkle.

PERHAPS because Brian knew of his parents' fondness for Nancy, he wasn't going to say anything about the breakup when he stepped off the little plane yesterday. This call was so sudden, he explained; Nancy just couldn't pull it together to get here.

"What do you mean, 'pull it together'?" his mother, Ruth, asked later, over dinner at the club. (Neither of her sons had children; what was there to pull together?) When Brian didn't answer, Ruth continued, "Because I need to know what furniture you-all want from the house. We've got to make arrangements for—"

"I'm getting a divorce," Brian said. "The last thing I need is more furniture."

"Brian, no!" Ruth burst out. She jammed her cigarette into the glass ashtray. Then, big-boned and proper, she placed a hand on her broad, silk-draped chest and translated, "You-all are having some problems right now, and you need to work things out." The huge bow at her throat looked comical.

"Well, if that's what you want to think." Brian shrugged. "Our lawyers have met twice, but if that's what you want to think."

"I think we'll talk about this later," Mr. H. said, and ordered another whiskey.

Brian continued to eat his steak even with his mother's fingers curled around his elbow, which, after she squeezed, she told him to take off the table. Later, Paul told Mia the story: Brian had been having an affair and Nancy had found out. Overcome by an image of Nancy deceived and angry, Mia could barely hear his account.

"I wish I could talk to her," she said. "I mean I hope she knows she can talk to me."

IN the master bedroom, Ruth announces that she will throw away all her mother-in-law's shoes. "Don't you think," she says to Mia.

Mia agrees, but doesn't know why Ruth discards a full bottle of aspirin and an unopened jar of hand lotion. Emery boards still in the package, baby powder, nail scissors, all land in the wastebasket. Amber bottles she pitches after reading the prescriptions. Lipsticks, deodorant; and then Ruth half throws, half places a nearly full bottle of Chanel No. 5 in the wastebasket on top of the other things. Mia must stop herself from reaching for it. She feels no connection, really, between the old woman they visited in the hospital and all these things.

Except for Ruth, no one quite knows what to do in the house. Their hostess is not there, and the men, especially, seem to be at loose ends.

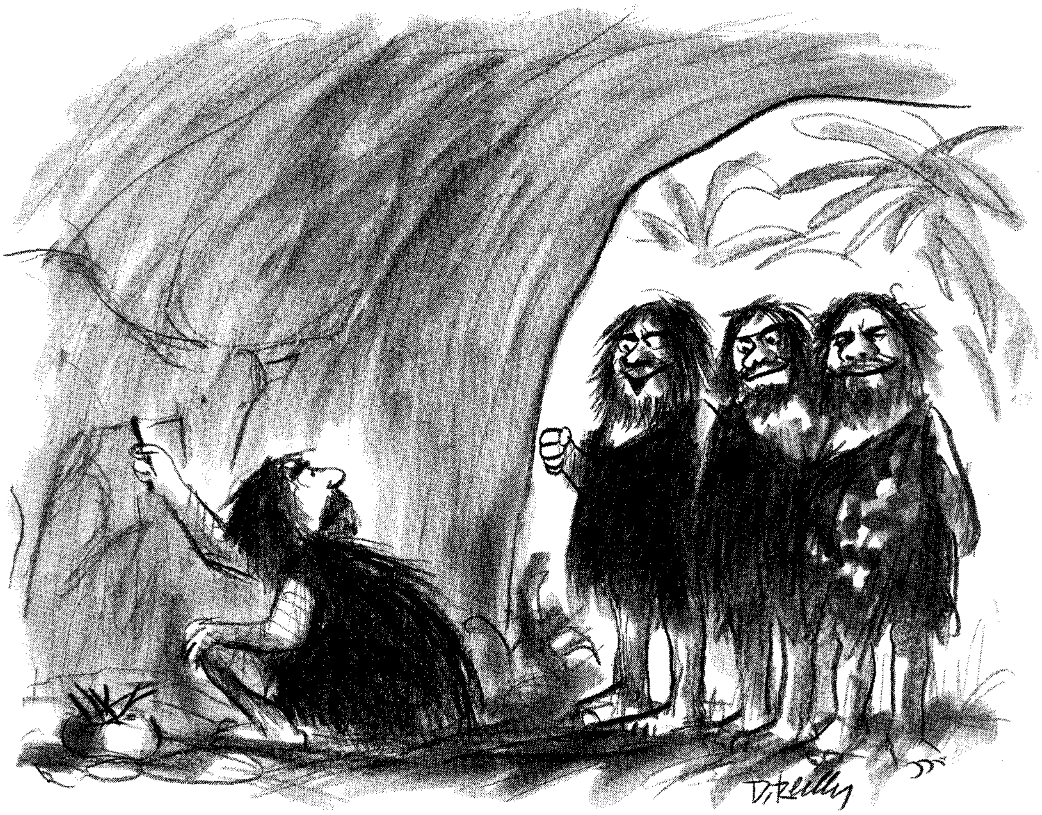
"Maybe I'll take the car into town," Brian says after lunch. "See if I can memorize Main Street."

He is standing in the doorway of the guest bedroom. Paul is lying on the bed, and Mia is refolding clothes. She figures that Mr. H. is not the kind of man who would tolerate panty hose hanging in the shower, and she stuffs a dirty pair into the pocket of her suitcase. She had not known how to pack for this trip, and since they go to the same restaurant every night—something about buying a membership, in Texas—she is running out of clothes.

She says, "I think your mother mentioned going to the museum at the Fort."

"Right," Brian says. "*You-all* are going to the museum so I can have that sobering talk with my father. Right."

WHEN an animal ran in front of the car the night Mia and Paul arrived, she felt a release of tension she had not known was there. Because while the shafts from the beak-shaped street lights intruded into the dark car she had stared at flaws—a hole in Paul's sweater, the scar on his hand—as she strained to hear what his parents were saying. The ease and squeaks of an old car, the smell. If either parent in the front seat of the old Chrysler had been her own, Mia would have known right away where matters stood. But it wasn't until Ruth said "Your grandmother would come out for ribs with us if they'd let her" that Mia knew they'd come in time—her husband's grandmother was still alive. Somehow, she had felt responsible for getting Paul here. Brian had been too late.



"We've come up with an idea for getting your stuff into caves everywhere."

• •

Mia had met Paul's grandmother just once before seeing her in the hospital. It had been at Mia and Paul's wedding, three years earlier, when the old woman had winked at her over her highball and said, "What I always say: make the first one strong and then just coast."

The woman's nightgowns are still hanging out on the clothesline. Even after the call came from the hospital, Ruth washed out another one, or started to, and then there was nothing left to do but hang it out with the others to dry. Now, at night, the clothesline bisects the moon and the pastel flannel nightgowns blow, forgotten. Mr. H. and Ruth have retired, and Mia and Paul and Brian are sitting on the slick floor in the dining area, passing around a joint. Brian is talking about the apartment he's moved to, and Mia is staring at a triangle of moonlight, wishing he would stop. Before he arrived, she had looked out at prairies that made her eyelids flutter, at sun shining on houses she didn't know, and thought, At least Nancy is coming. She had counted on her sister-in-law as she might count on a distant cousin for relief at a dreaded family picnic. Now, in some ways, she feels more alone than if it were Paul who was not here. Brian is talking about Nancy—"She'll be fine," he says—and suddenly Mia can't stand it anymore; she opens the sliding glass doors and runs out into the dark yard. The nightgowns—one pink, one blue—are in the same style: rosebuds at the neck, smocking. She unclips them, and starts back to the house. A dog barks. The air feels good. The nightgowns are new, and she knows that Ruth will throw them away.

"Okay?" Paul says, rubbing her back as she resumes her place beside him. She nods, and he pulls her closer. He asks her to get out the postcards that she bought at the Fort earlier. He tells Brian, "They even documented a family that was scalped and killed by Indians. The daughter escaped, though."

Mia locates her purse, and hands Brian postcards of a spinning wheel, a chair draped with quilts, and one of a mannequin dressed for the Alamo commemoration of 1957.

"Our heritage," Brian says. He is stoned. "Wow." Mia reminds him that it might have been the whites who taught the Indians about scalping, but he either doesn't hear her or doesn't register. "Was it a big fort, or what?" he says. "I mean, you know. Was it real?"

"Of course it was real," Mia says. She is still standing.

"This mannequin is in a glass box," he says, shaking his head.

"Well, lots of things are in cases," Mia says. "Guns and farm tools and clothes. Letters. Haven't you ever been to a museum?" She touches Paul's head. "I'm going to bed. But you stay."

"Wait," Brian says.

Mia turns. Without Nancy, she and Brian have nothing to say to each other. He looks up at her, then down at the postcard.

"Did you say someone could be scalped without being killed?"

PROUD of their museum, the guides hovered. Dressed in period costume, they wore too much makeup, and Mia noticed that one wore nail polish. But when, upon leaving, Mia glanced back, she saw one of them remove her bonnet and shake her hair free; and through those tiny paned windows at that distance at dusk, it could have been a long time ago. Mia falls asleep remembering this, so she dreams about it. She dreams of living there. Brian, not Paul, stands by the big open fireplace, and there is a little girl who complains of being cold. Brian, suddenly angered by her whining, heaves kerosene at the fire, which leaps out like liquid, searing skin from his arm. Mia screams, and the little girl cries out and runs in circles around the stone room, spinning the spinning wheel each time she passes it. Not until her bonnet flies off do they realize with horror that (the senselessness of dreams) the fire has burned away her hair. Mia wakes with wet eyes, and Paul has taken all the covers.

“DON'T forget to get you-all some beer!” Ruth calls out to the men, who are going to see about fixing the air-conditioner in the Chrysler, an errand which, when they discussed it that morning, seemed at least as important as stopping by the funeral home on the way back.

“Now,” Ruth says, clasping her hands together. She is wearing a blue wool skirt and a sweater of a lighter shade, and low heels that click into the kitchen, which she and Mia have started to clean. Ruth has shown Mia an exercise for stomach muscles which you can do anywhere: you just have to remember; you can do it in the checkout line or while folding laundry or while doing dishes. Mia wonders if Ruth thinks she has got fat. The things in the refrigerator take away her appetite; fruitcake in cellophane, rotten vegetables, moldy bread. A bowl covered with tinfoil, which she leaves covered. Why hadn't they done this before? They didn't have to wait until the old woman died to clean out her refrigerator.

“Look there,” Ruth says. She has moved to the desk in the dining-room area, and the picture she holds is of Paul at about age three. He runs from the camera, making a face. The photograph is characteristic of the fifties: black-and-white with rippled edges.

The one visiting hour Mia spent at the hospital, Paul's grandmother sat straight up in bed and stared at photographs. She called them snapshots. Refusing to submit to memory lapses, she summoned the most superfluous details; dresses and haircuts, even why someone was missing from a particular picture. “Reckon he was at the Academy by then. Or was he fixing to marry that girl? He ever marry her? What was her name?” Many of the people were dead, but she had to know whose back yard she was looking at.

The photograph Ruth hands Mia now makes her laugh; Paul watches the daring little Brian reaching into the cookie jar.

Mia smiles. “Classic,” she says. She holds the photo out to Ruth, who looks at her in a detached way.

“Has Brian said anything to you?” she asks.

“No,” Mia answers. She doesn't know what to say. “It doesn't seem like they're going to change their minds. I mean, I think maybe he still loves Nancy—”

Ruth simply looks at her; this was not what she wanted to hear.

“IS it late? I'm hungry,” Mia says. Paul has wakened her from a nap, and she shivers, not really awake yet, cold. He says it's raining, and rubs her arms. A radio plays far off. She tells him they cleaned the kitchen. She says, “It's hard to know what to offer to do and what to just do.”

Paul stands, leans back against the low dresser, his broad back reflected in the mirror Mia is too shy to claim for their Chicago apartment. He picks up an ornate china bell and shakes it. He sets it down. “It's the little things,” he says. “Really.” He crosses his arms. Shifting his weight, he crumples the doily on the dresser top. “Brian's gone. I put him on a plane.”

MR. H. pulls out his glasses and looks at the menu. He closes it. “I assume we all want steaks,” he says.

They are seated at the same table as on other nights, and as usual Mia offers to get him his salad from the salad bar. When she and Paul return, the subject of Brian has resurfaced. Mr. H. is furious. “That boy plain doesn't know what matters,” he said when he found his son had left. Apparently, he has tried to call him, up in Washington, but there is no answer. The first time he tried, he dialled the old number by mistake and got Nancy.

“Habit, I reckon,” he says, seizing his drink.

“Well, what did she say?” Mia asks.

Mr. H. sets his whiskey down. “Say? Why, she didn't say anything. I just told her it was a wrong number, and that was that.”

“I'm sure you were polite,” Ruth says promptly.

“But—” Mia says.

“These things are hard,” Ruth says.

Mia is still trying to smile. “Wait a minute, you didn't even tell her who it was? I don't understand.” She does understand. She looks back and forth between them. “You didn't think she'd recognize your voice?”

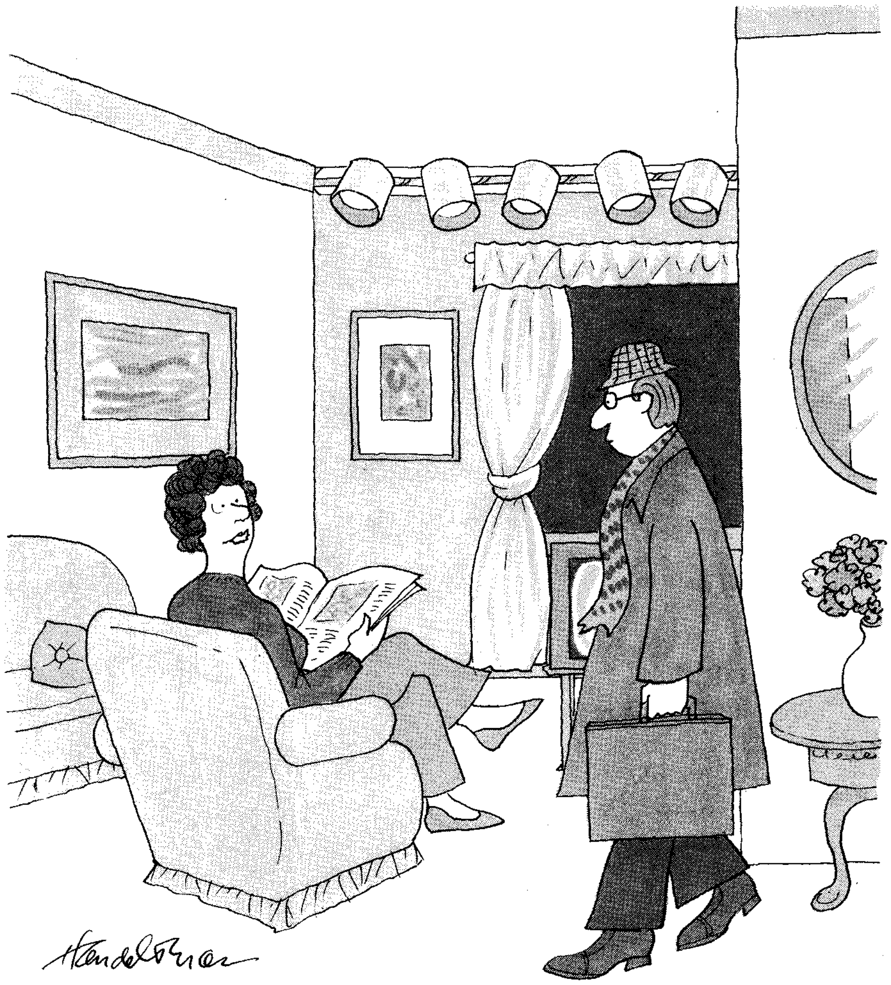
STUB OF A RED PENCIL

You were sharpened to a fine point
With a rusty razor blade.
Then the unknown hand swept the shavings
Into its moist palm
And disappeared from view.

You lay on the desk next to
The official-looking document
With a long list of names.
It was up to us to imagine the rest:
The high ceiling with its cracks
And odd-shaped water stains;
The window with its view
Of roofs covered with snow.

An inconceivable, varied world
Surrounding your severe presence
On every side,
Stub of a red pencil.

—CHARLES SIMIC



"Well, Mr. Dog Eat Dog, did you eat a dog today or did a dog eat you?"

"He wasn't thinking at all, doll, that's just it," Ruth says.

Mia looks at Mr. H. "But you could've called her back. You could have explained. Apologized."

Her father-in-law looks away, but Ruth is in there almost quickly enough for it to seem she has interrupted. "After all, this has nothing to do with us, hon," she says to Mia. Catching Mia's eye over the candle, she says to her husband, "Mia looks cold, Dick, give her your jacket."

But no one moves. Paul has not said anything, and Ruth pauses before saying, "I've been thinking about the service tomorrow. I don't think there'll be too many people, not so many that we couldn't have them over to the house afterward." She is the only one who will talk, who has found the appropriate change of subject, and uses it.

"I think that would be nice," Mr. H. says to her.

THE graveyard is mottled with dark patches, but there are no trees big enough to cast such shadows; clouds make these.

"You okay?" Paul says.

They slow down. She has told him she has a headache, and he, knowing her headaches and knowing she will not take anything for it, puts a hand around her neck, but she is thinking of another place. Christmas in the East, snow. The vision of snow quenches the sight of sun-drenched dirt, but the image forms, too, because of the way he has his hand around her neck—her father used to do this. Just cupped his hand around her small neck, weighing it gently as they walked. It was when she was too old to have her hand held, and when he wanted to make an effort; it was when they didn't see each other often, those weekends once a month when she took the train or bus down from her mother's to see him. She would do anything to spare a child that, those lonely hours between one home and another, hours that at best would form the hard, sad core of good character.

There is a breeze, and the minister's voice comes at her in waves. Around them, for miles in every direction, is desert, a wide open, relentless blue sky. Mr. H. watches impassively as his mother is lowered into the ground, and Mia remembers what Paul told her on the small plane from San Antonio. Both grandmothers, he said, had claimed he resembled their respective husbands. Mia believes this—that he resembles both men—because she believes that there is something of Texas in all of them, in their faces and in the way they think. Paul has his arm around her, steadying her, and her headache seems to pass. But then in her sudden brave glance at the joyless landscape of mesquite and sand and black shadow, she feels dizzy again; dark shapes blur. These are the only family she has; Nancy comes from a family of brothers and sisters and money. Mia is startled by this thought, then embarrassed and ashamed. She has never thought this way before. But then, before, it was what she and her sister-in-law had in common that was important. Staring down into the grave, she remembers Mr. H. saying that, at least in the fifties, a standard grave in certain parts of Texas had to be at least fifty-four inches deep. She will not be buried here. She looks up, her eyes scanning the horizon, where a mesquite tree zigzags like a crazy dancer dressed in rags. Mesquite, Ruth told her, was a member of the bean family.

In the car after the service, they drive by the same scattering of wooden crosses and odd stones that Mia noticed the first time they came here.

"What are those, anyway?" she says now. "Are those graves for pets?"

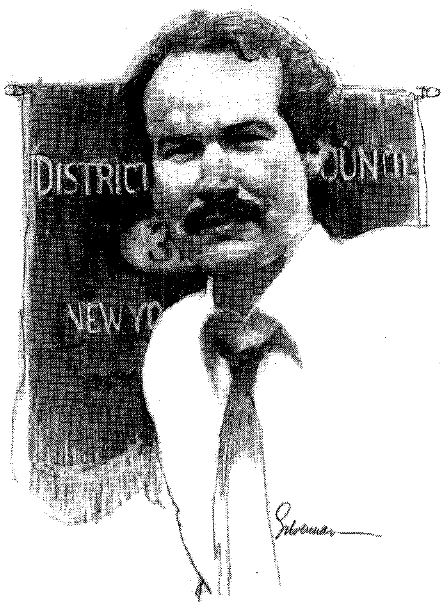
"Well now, what do you think? No reason to stop separatin' folks afterward," Mr. H. says easily.

Mia stiffens. She stares out the window at the passing landscape. Paul has his arm around her. After a minute, she leans on his shoulder. The car is big and heavy, and smells faintly of perfume. Mia closes her eyes. Paul is telling his mother that they would like to have the mirror from the guest room. Then comes Ruth's voice. She closes her eyes and listens to Ruth's voice.

—SARAH GADDIS

PROFILES

GETTING THINGS DONE



Dennis Rivera

LEADERSHIP is in short supply in many American institutions these days, and nowhere more than in the command posts of organized labor. Most of today's union chiefs are faceless careerists, devoid of insight or inspiration. Enveloping them is a flabbiness, born of good living and bureaucratic torpor, that makes them unfit to be evangelists to a new generation of workers, impatient with old life styles and institutional rigidities. One result has been that only one of every six wage earners now belongs to a union—half the ratio of thirty-five years ago. (In the private economy, the historic mainstay of union strength, the ratio is still worse: one of every eight.) Labor's plight is especially gloomy in the fast-expanding service trades, where close to three-quarters of the work force is now employed. There, unions are often weak to the point of invisibility.

This ebbing of employee readiness to embrace collective security coincides with a disturbing growth of emphasis among employers on slashing the share of the corporate dollar going to labor and on raids, mergers, leveraged buyouts, and other Wall Street mechanisms whose effect was to close down plants and kill jobs. Even traditional union bastions, such as newspapers, are in peril. Earlier this fall, in New York, when employees of the *News* went on strike after an incident of alleged harassment by management, the paper's owners, the Tribune Company, which is based in Chicago, brought in hundreds of "permanent replacement workers," or scabs, and continued to put out the paper, with the obvious goal of breaking the unions entirely. The future seemed grim for the striking employees: in the view of many observers, the only two possible outcomes of the strike were a crushed union or a closed newspaper. The nine unions immediately affected by the strike—including drivers, pressmen, mailers, and the Newspaper Guild, which represents writers and editors—seemed powerless to keep the paper from functioning. What's more, they were receiving little encouragement from their fellow-unions. Leaders of the Central Labor Council, a federation of local A.F.L.-C.I.O. unions, appeared to have no strategy and seemed lost in defeatism. Even though most unionists firmly believe that an attack on one union hurts all unions, there was little coördinated resistance to the Tribune Company's efforts. And then, within a few weeks, after the unions' umbrella group, the Allied Printing Trades Council, formed an ad-hoc group, called the Strike Support Committee, to meet every day and form a strategy, a leader began to emerge—a soft-spoken Puerto Rican named Dennis Rivera, who knew nothing about the newspaper business. A year and a half earlier, Rivera had become president of Local 1199 of the Drug, Hospital and Health Care Employees' Union. Martin Luther King, Jr., used to describe 1199 as his favorite union, but in the last half-dozen years it had been all but paralyzed by internal strife. Even before he got involved in the *News* strike, Rivera, as the healer of factionalism within this union of a hundred thousand workers, and the driving force in its current rapid headway toward regeneration, had been attracting national attention.

In October of 1989, less than six months after taking office, Rivera became a hero to his own rank and file by outgeneralling the contract negotiators for New York's world-renowned teaching hospitals and medical centers. Through an adroit mixture of strategy, politics, and public relations, he split the united front of hospital management and won for his army of bedpan emptiers and culinary-cart wheelers—the vast majority of them black and Latino women—large wage increases at a time when unions with far greater resources all over the country were being forced by employers to surrender past gains or to embark on strikes that wound up disastrously for them and their members. "Rivera's strategic planning was brilliant, says Mel Miller, the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, who was a close observer of the negotiations. "Instead of the union getting busted, the employers got busted."

Equally impressive was Rivera's pivotal role last year in persuading David Dinkins to leave his snug harbor as borough president of Manhattan and undertake a chancy run for mayor. "Dennis was more than just another citizen when he urged me to make the race," Dinkins says. "He was a significant leader with a constituency and an ability to assist my cause."

The crucial phases of the struggle for a new hospital contract coincided with the mayoral campaign, and it took deft maneuvering for Rivera to lead his forces to victory on both fronts. His central problem was how to put maximum steam into the local's contract push without diminishing the intensity of his drive to round up Hispanic and labor support for Dinkins. Rivera negotiated all the hazards involved with the same aplomb he had shown two years earlier, when, as a Local 1199 executive vice-president, he contrived to establish a highly improbable but decidedly effective partnership between John Cardinal O'Connor and the Reverend Jesse Jackson—a partnership that helped win a fifty-one-per-cent increase in wages and benefits for fifty thousand home-health-care workers, the most heavily exploited of all workers in the health-care pyramid. The new partners' intercession, reinforced by a Rivera-inspired flood of sympathetic press and television commentary, shamed city and state authorities into ending a buck-passing contest that had been holding up the money. For months before they stepped in, well-deserved raises for these women, almost all of them nearly as impoverished as the people into whose homes they go on what amount to errands of mercy, had been blocked while aides to Governor Mario Cuomo and Mayor Edward Koch went back and forth on whose responsibility it was to underwrite the wage-increase bill.

"I've come to know Dennis only recently," says Theodore W. Kheel, a long-standing figure on the New York City labor scene, who now serves as the newspaper unions' unpaid adviser. "His talent for organization and getting things done has been an incredible asset to the union cause. He quickly sensed the importance of the *News* strike: it may appear to have nothing to do with hospital workers, but in fact it has to do with workers everywhere. He's young, he's energetic, and he has managed to establish himself here in a very brief period of time. I think he's going to be a major factor in New York City for many years to come."

I FIRST met Rivera on a freezing day in November of last year, when he was addressing a handful of listeners at a minuscule rally outside the New York University Medical Center to drum up popular support for a statewide system of universal health insurance. What struck me most was not the thrust of his brief remarks, which were predictable, but, rather, his shoes: they were so far gone that the soles flapped open and his toes popped out against the icy pavement through holes in his socks. He showed neither embarrassment nor mock pride in explaining afterward that those were his only shoes; he had been too busy with the contract negotiations and the mayoral election to shop for another pair or take the old ones to a shoemaker. Clearly, he is not of the school of labor leaders who dote on monogrammed shirts, custom-tailored suits, and other sartorial refinements. Chino trousers and boldly striped shirts grabbed off a bargain counter are his normal garb, along with a beat-up brown fedora for rainy days, but he does own three suits and a couple of blazers, all bought at thrift shops for ten or fifteen dollars apiece.

My inquiries about his clothes apparently got to him, however. One evening soon afterward, when we were going to dinner at Amazonas, a Brazilian restaurant in SoHo, Rivera appeared wearing dashing black boots and a spectacular black hat, flat-topped and broad-brimmed, Mexican-ranchero style. He lost no time in letting me know that he had consulted the hatters' union on where to buy a chapeau with a union label, but it was plain that his acquisitions delighted him. (Weeks passed before he reverted to wearing his resoled tan loafers and the fedora.) When someone in the restaurant observed that the new hat seemed to make a statement, Rivera grinned, and said the statement was that he had steered clear of anything that might make him look like a Texas cattle baron. He rarely misses an opportunity to stress his identification with the working class. When I suggested talking further with him at home by phone, he informed me that, since a long strike against NYNEX by the Communications Workers of America was still dragging on, I would have to initiate the call, because, as a mark of solidarity with the strikers, he had refused to pay his bill, and the company had responded by cutting off his ability to make outgoing calls. (Later, it cut off the phone altogether.)

Rivera fits none of the stereotypes that caricaturists habitually use to lampoon union bosses—no bulging belly, no beer nose, no ingrained scowl. His features are well formed, lifted above conventional handsomeness by a magnetic flash in his brown eyes. He has plenty of self-assurance, which he uses to convey to people around him a feeling of boundless respect for their individual worth. He is not a great orator in the John L. Lewis or Walter Reuther mold, but the idealism and the visionary spirit that animated the labor movement in the New Deal era imbue his words with an uplifting urgency.

"He is an exciting change from the schlumps who head most unions these days," says Professor Eli Ginzberg, of Columbia University, who was an adviser on health and manpower policy to every President from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Jimmy Carter. Gerald Hudson, Local 1199's executive vice-president in charge of education and political action, sees Rivera's distinctive quality as a force against paralysis on the staff. "He is always pushing, always bringing restlessness to the rest of us," Hudson says. Deputy Mayor Bill Lynch, himself a union organizer, adds, "He's carried away not by any cult of personality but by a sense of service and mission."

The proletarian attitude that marks Rivera's conduct and attire is also visible in his living quarters. He rents a one-bedroom apartment in Chelsea. The furnishings are Spartan: a red-covered double futon, a blue-covered single futon, and a television set in the bedroom; a table, four chairs, and two single futons folded as chairs in a combination living/dining room; and a motley assortment of pots, pans, and dishes in the kitchen. Logos from the Wilderness Society and Greenpeace decorate the front door, but both are heritages from an environmentalist who used to rent the apartment.

Rivera has a son, Jaime. He is nine and lives in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn with Rivera's former wife, Dr. Concha Mendoza, who is a medical director at Gouverneur Hospital, and he visits his father every Wednesday night and on alternate weekends. (Rivera also has a sixteen-year-old daughter, Melissa, by a woman he was briefly married to while he and she were fellow-students at the University of Puerto Rico, in San Juan. The bride's parents were never happy with what Rivera himself describes as a "shotgun wedding," and they have forbidden him ever to visit either their daughter or Melissa.) Another frequent visitor to Rivera's apartment is Dr. Linda Levin, a pediatrician at Mt. Sinai Medical Center, who has been a constant companion of his for the last year and a half. Their relationship has become so close that during Easter week he took her to Puerto Rico, along with his son, to meet his grandmother, who is ninety-five.

RIVERA was born in 1950 in Aibonito, a small industrial and farming town about an hour's drive south of San Juan. Its name means "how beautiful"—a testimonial to the many flowers that thrive there and the verdant mountains in which the town nestles. It is also known as "the Switzerland of Puerto Rico," because, standing nearly a half mile above sea level, it occupies one of the island's highest spots.

Dennis's father was Daniel Hickey, an Irish-American from Dunkirk, New York, who served as an Army Air Forces pilot in the Second World War and came to Puerto Rico shortly after V-J Day in search of a site for a factory that the Van Raalte Company, manufacturers of women's undergarments, wanted to build there. Hickey's employers had given him a twofold assignment: to find a suitable site for their plant and then to build and manage it. Aibonito appealed to him on grounds other than its natural beauty: Van Raalte would be the first large enterprise of any kind to be established there, and its isolation from such metropolitan centers as San Juan and Ponce, where labor leaders were organizing newly established plants, led the management to believe that unionism could be avoided and wages kept low. In labor parlance, such units are known as "runaway shops," and are anathema to all right-thinking unionists. Eventually, Hickey established three runaway shops—actually, good-sized factories—in Aibonito.

While preparing to open the first one, Hickey stayed at an inn, adjacent to the town square, run by a strong-minded Puerto Rican of Spanish extraction named Maria Luisa Rivera, herself the mother of seven sons and two daughters. Her lively intelligence and her encyclopedic familiarity with local affairs prompted Hickey to turn to her increasingly as operations got under way. First, he sought her guidance on hiring seamstresses, and then he put her on the company's payroll for a year, as a supervisor directing the orientation of new employees.

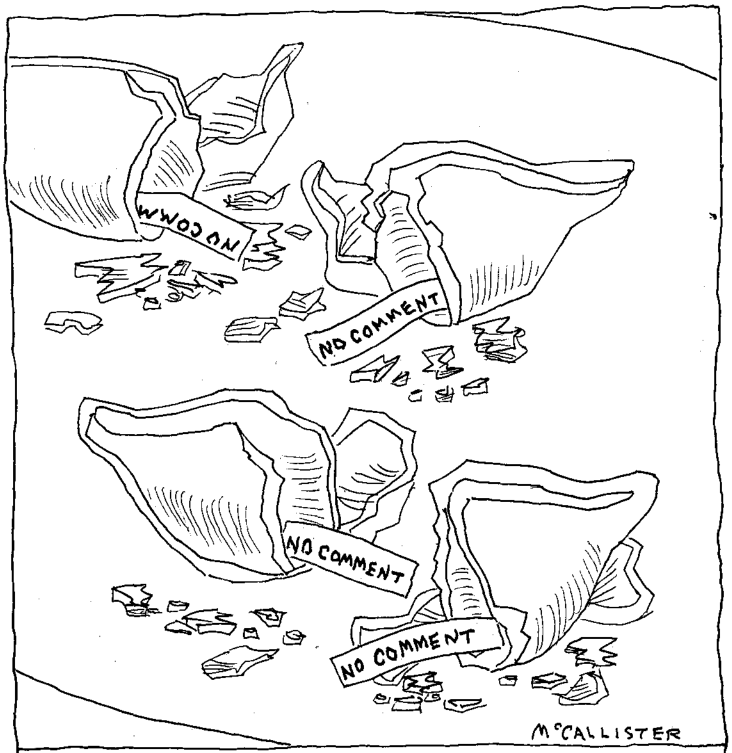
Hickey's stay at the inn had its romantic side. He met and speedily fell in love with the innkeeper's elder daughter, Olga—a tall, dark-haired woman of exceptional beauty, who was helping her mother run the place. In 1940, Olga had gone to Louisville, Kentucky, to enter Nazareth College. She had enrolled and had bought a full wardrobe of school clothing, but loneliness overtook her before she attended her first class, and her mother agreed that she should sell her winter clothes to a friend and come home. She stopped off for a while in New York and thought of entering Marymount Manhattan College, but the expense would have been too great, so she returned to Aibonito and took courses in a secretarial school. She never worked as a secretary, however. Instead, she became her mother's right hand at the inn.

Hickey was a whirlwind suitor. After six months of courtship, he brought a group of friends to join him in serenading Olga one evening. While they stood below and played guitars, Hickey climbed a ficus tree outside her window and sang love songs to her. She very soon said yes. They were married in December, 1946. Her wedding portrait shows her in a satin gown with a train stretching ten yards behind her. Dennis, born four years later, was their first child. His sister, Olguita, came two years after Dennis, and Jaime, the final arrival, followed her by a year and a half.

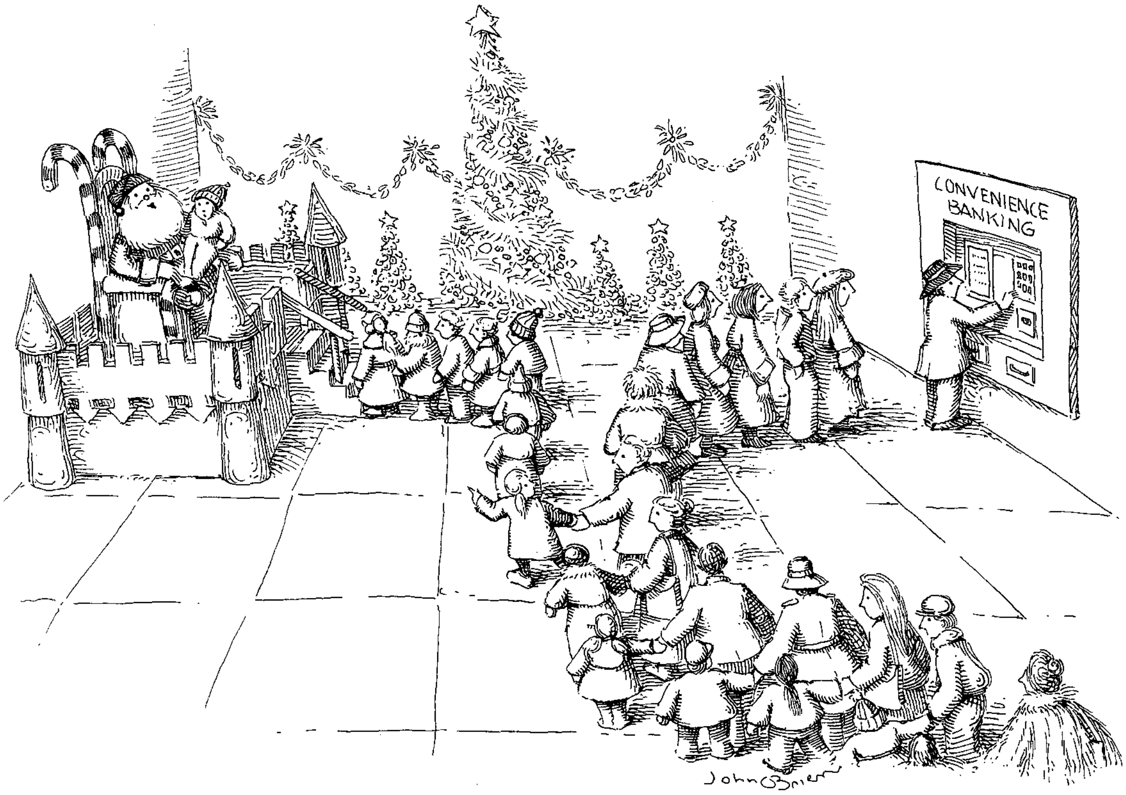
The Van Raalte plant prospered, and the young family moved into a comfortable house, but Dennis showed from his earliest years that he was unlikely ever to become a pillar of the establishment. His mother, who still lives in Aibonito, recalls that not long after he began attending a parochial school he was so touched by the sight of a poor classmate getting off the school bus barefoot that he gave the boy his best pair of shoes. When his mother asked why it had to be his best pair, Dennis replied that anything less would be an insult. For that reason, she was not really astonished at something that happened a dozen years later: When Dennis went to enroll in the University of Puerto Rico, she gave him money to buy books for his classes, but on his way to the bookstore he met a fellow-student who needed a loan to do the same thing. Dennis returned home bookless.

Radical activities engrossed him during his university years. Up to then, basketball and baseball, two sports at which he excelled, had taken up most of his time outside the classroom. Now he began leading marches in opposition to higher tuition, and joining other students in demanding a larger voice for students in formulating academic policy. When he was nineteen, he was the chief organizer of a community-wide demonstration in the Aibonito town square against United States involvement in the Vietnam War. At twenty, he served as president of the Aibonito chapter of the Independentista Party. Then, at twenty-two, he ran for city councilman on that party's ticket, but lost badly. "I think my family voted for me, and that was it," he says now.

These reformist tendencies did not prevent Dennis from taking conservative positions at home, especially when it



FORTUNE COOKIES AS SERVED IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT DINING ROOM came to his sister's upbringing. Olguita, who is now the wife of an executive of the Puerto Rican telephone company and has two sons of her own, remembers that Dennis would stand at the front door like a dictator in an attempt to prevent her from going out with a friend to see a movie he considered inappropriate. "You're not going to that movie, kissing and all that stuff," he would say. "Also, I don't like you to go out with that girl. I think she's a bad influence."



Dennis was no less protective of his younger brother. Jaime, who is a counsellor and therapist at a Veterans Administration hospital in San Juan, used to annoy Dennis by insisting on tagging along when he went out with his buddies as a teen-ager, but any time one of them pushed Jaime around Dennis would rush to his defense. Jaime recalls with special vividness a fistfight at home plate between Dennis, then sixteen, and Jaime's Little League baseball coach, who had thrown the boy off the team.

In 1973, Rivera's itch to remake the world had become so strong that he quit the university one course short of completing the requirements for a bachelor's degree. "I felt that the whole society was being turned upside down, so who needed a diploma?" he explains. It was a period in which independent left-wing unions in Puerto Rico were challenging old-line A.F.L.-C.I.O. organizations as too lethargic or too corrupt, or both. When some rebel unionists were discharged from their jobs for leading a sanitation strike in San Juan, Rivera accepted an invitation to sign on with the insurgent group as a volunteer organizer. (He began receiving forty dollars a week after eight months on the job.) He was convinced that the established garbage union was doing nothing for its members, most of whom were illiterate and got little pay and less security.

The transition from being a campus hell-raiser to organizing hard-bitten sanitation employees turned out to be more difficult than Rivera and his fellow boat-rockers had expected. "Whoever wanted to represent these workers had to be very tough," he says. "You had to be up at four o'clock every morning, and you had to wear a gun, to show the other group that you would fight if necessary. One morning, we locked the garage gates, so the garbage trucks could not get out, and announced that a strike was on. The only trouble was that when we told the workers we were greeted with total silence. We had to call the whole thing off."

Five months later, the rebels had done enough preparatory work to stage a successful strike, and the new union was firmly in place. After that, Rivera assumed a prominent role in organizing hospital and home-health-care workers into what became one of the island's biggest and strongest unions.

Two unrelated developments in 1976 prompted Rivera to leave the island and come to New York to settle. One was romance and the other was his father's death, of cancer, after a short illness. He met Concha Mendoza, a Cuban, who was then a medical student at Boston University and had elected to spend her senior year in community-service assignments, taking care of impoverished patients in a complex of San Juan hospitals. She was supposed to move on to similar duty at hospitals in Colombia, but as her friendship with Rivera ripened into love she decided to stay in Puerto Rico for the rest of the year. Rivera, depressed by his father's death, chose to accompany her to the mainland when she went back to get her degree and accept a three-year residence at Kings County Hospital, in Brooklyn. In June, 1977, they were married, in Red Bank, New Jersey, and Dr. Mendoza started on her interneship.

The months after their marriage were lonely ones for Rivera. Handicapped by a limited knowledge of English, he couldn't find a job, and he saw almost nothing of his wife, for her first year as an interne required her to put in a thirty-six-hour tour every third day and to be at the hospital from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. on other days. On the rare occasions when she was off duty long enough to attend a party at a colleague's home and invited her husband to come along, he felt awkward and out of place, for other guests repeatedly sought to make conversation by asking him what he did. The experience was made doubly painful by memories of what a big shot he had been in Puerto

Rico; there he had been equally well known among those who hated him for his aggressiveness as a unionist and those who admired him for the same quality. Friends in San Juan had given Rivera a letter of introduction to Michael Mann, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. regional director in New York, but, according to Rivera, Mann refused to help him, because of Rivera's early focus on building up independent unions to displace the federation's affiliates on the island. He next turned to Local 1199, the union that best exemplified the virtues Rivera felt a labor organization ought to have.

THE local had begun organizing hospital employees in the late nineteen-fifties, a full quarter century after its formation as a union representing pharmacists and other drugstore employees in the New York metropolitan area. It had been founded by a small coterie of extreme leftists led by Leon Davis, a pro-Communist native of Russia, who had been a drugstore clerk in Harlem. Davis was still the president of the local when one of his members, who was a janitor for a drug chain, came in to report a conversation he had just had with a friend holding a similar job in a big hospital. When the friend learned that the member of Local 1199 was earning twice as much as he was and working fewer hours, he said he wished the union would address itself to the needs of hospital janitors and of orderlies, nurses' aides, laundresses, food workers, and other unskilled hospital workers, all earning wages in the neighborhood of thirty dollars a week.

The idea appealed to Davis. Unions active among civil-service workers were then engaged in enrolling employees of the municipal hospitals, but none were showing any interest in the tens of thousands of workers at the bottom of the wage scale in the voluntary hospitals and other non-governmental health-care facilities. The boards of those institutions were made up of some of the city's élite—bankers, industrialists, and heirs to large fortunes. These arbiters of hospital policy gave a frigid reception to the intrusion into their domain of a radical union bent on getting money for the workers—money the trustees felt the hospitals could not afford to pay.

That conflict of wills led to a 1959 strike at Mt. Sinai, Lenox Hill, Beth Israel, and several other large hospitals. The strike ended without a clear-cut victory for either side, but it gave Local 1199 the foothold it required to establish itself as a permanent spokesman for a steadily growing army of dedicated and militant hospital workers, who up to then had been at the mercy of their often arbitrary bosses. Over the years, Davis and the leadership team he assembled capitalized on their newfound strength to make the local—its status as a drugstore workers' union soon eclipsed by the influx of members from the health field—a symbol of advancement toward harmony in race relations and toward the expansion of union services to a membership historically deprived of education and social opportunity. It tripled the wages of its rank and file in less than a decade, built a large coöperative housing development of considerable architectural distinction for its members in East Harlem, and initiated cultural programs ranging across all branches of history, art, music, and show business—activities that won it a national reputation as "a union with soul." That reputation enabled it to reach out during the seventies to organize hospital locals in Baltimore, Charleston, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and other cities across the country, all under the 1199 logo but with appended initials to differentiate them from the mother hen in New York.

Rivera's experience in organizing hospital employees in Puerto Rico proved a passport to a job as an organizer in Davis's local, which was having trouble finding enough people who had expertise both in Spanish and in unionism—especially unionism with a leftist political tilt—to serve the local's mushrooming Hispanic membership. Stephen Frankel, a vice-president, hired Rivera (who had adopted his mother's surname) at two hundred dollars a week in September of 1977. "I couldn't believe it," Rivera says today. "Doing something I enjoyed and getting paid so much for it."

His joy almost proved short-lived, however. When Frankel took him to meet Davis—in the same office, on the seventh floor of the union headquarters, on West Forty-third Street, that Rivera now occupies—the union president started screaming as soon as he heard Rivera's accent. As Rivera tells it: "Davis shouted at Steve, 'Jerk, don't you know he can't even speak English?' He literally chased me out of the office with his curses. I rushed into the stairwell until Frankel came out and saw me there, trembling. 'Does this mean I don't have a job?' I asked him. 'Relax,' he said. 'We'll work it out.' And he did." (Rivera's English still bears a slight Spanish accent.)

Despite its happy outcome, the initial encounter with Davis confirmed for Rivera an impression about New Yorkers as unwelcoming which had developed during his weeks of futile job-

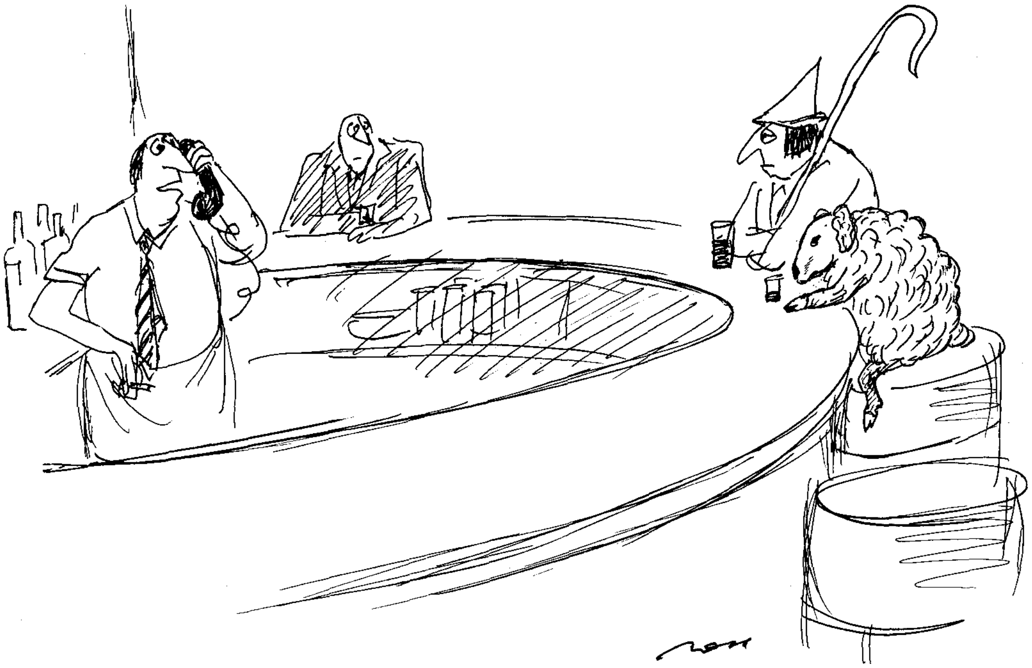
NOR AM I WHO I WAS THEN

Far north in the county
On a clay shelf
Overlooking the valley, the house
Where I was raised holds up
The house you see and
In this way survives
Vagaries of ownership,
History, and reinterpretation.

Once modest, lower middle class,
Still it was one of a kind,
Its freshness
Green-speckled bricks
Set in maroon mortar and
Maroon-stained posts and beams
Supporting roof and flat-topped carport.
The effect was like silver-
Green pines in red dirt,
Or exotic red-leafed lettuce
They serve in fancy restaurants.
But the roof of tar
Spattered with gravel, roof
Where I myself have walked,
Is dangerous now—pitched steeper,
TV antenna gone—and covered
By standard thirty-year shingles,
Regular and buff as brick
That has grown below
Into sprawling rooms and garages,
Enclosing whole lawns
Of my imagination.

—SUSAN ELIZABETH HOWE

• •



"Yes, he's here. No, he's not alone."

hunting. "I felt there was no courtesy in New York," he says. "I perceived the people as very brusque, very rude, very impatient. I came from a more gentlemanly atmosphere, where you talked to strangers in bars or stores, or anywhere. Here, if you talked to people in the subway they looked at you as if you were crazy. It was very hard to adapt." His way of adapting was to become unfailingly polite in his personal contacts. "Please, would you be so kind . . . " is his almost universal preface to any request for service, however routine or trivial. So essential does he consider civility and regard for the dignity of others that he has made those qualities the basis of a continuing endeavor to nurture pride and self-esteem among his members, few of whom grew up knowing much of either.

The priority he has assigned to this effort might seem a sentimental detour from the union's basic mission of raising the living standards and strengthening the job rights of its rank and file, but the fact is that it has already proved a tangible asset. Rivera's watchword, "The pride is back," became a decisive rallying cry in the successful campaign he conducted to overcome factional divisions within the local and to cement the unity necessary for 1199's victory over hospital management in 1989. The years between Rivera's introduction to Davis and the 1989 contract talks had seen a dismaying decline in the confidence of the local's members in their own ability to stand together in a crisis.

The decline had set in even before Davis retired, in 1982, following a series of strokes. In his nearly five decades of dominance, he had arrogated a vast concentration of power to himself as president—a concentration that ill-comported with the organization's vaunted democracy. What was worse, Davis, in common with most union patriarchs, had made grossly inadequate preparations for giving successors responsibility. Changed demography clearly ruled out a continuation of control by a tiny group of white Jewish males whose roots lay in the old drug union. The time had long since arrived for minority leaders, preferably black, to take over, and his successor, Doris Turner, a former dietary clerk given to religious proselytizing and black nationalism, paid little heed to Davis's more traditional secular leftism. Turner viewed attempts to merge the local and national unions as an encroachment on her power. From her election until the start of the Rivera era, seven years later, 1199 was a battlefield. Internal unity vanished as Turner purged the staff of Davis loyalists and pulled the New York local further and further away from the national union it had spawned. Legal maneuvering enveloped the local in suits and countersuits. Federal law-enforcement agencies investigated allegations of financial hanky-panky. Racial and factional antagonisms became so menacing that activists on both sides often carried guns for self-defense.

For Rivera, a youthful Davis aficionado, the struggle was a painful but valuable education, showing him what unionism at its most virulent and violent could be. He was high on Turner's enemy list from the beginning, and, although he was an elected organizer for 1199, his duties put him under her direct control. In the summer of 1982, Rivera says, she called him into her office and rebuked him for urging his old associates in Puerto Rico to bring the hospital union he had helped to form there into affiliation with the national union, which Turner was trying to weaken. According to Rivera, she made it plain that this was an act of personal disloyalty to her, and her resentment became stronger when the Puerto Rican union did become an affiliate in the fall.

The fervor of Rivera's involvement in the intra-union battle at that time was a factor in the breakup of his marriage to Dr. Mendoza, a year and a half after the birth of their son. Following their separation, Dr. Mendoza worried about the physical danger that hung over Rivera as the conflict grew uglier. "He got so many death threats that at one time he had to have a private detective as a bodyguard," she recalls. "I told him I didn't think it was worth it to risk your life and leave your son an orphan. His answer was 'I can't leave it. This is my life. I must stick with it.' "

In retaliation for the Puerto Rican union's move, Turner gave Rivera a succession of dead-end assignments, such as trying to organize in hospitals where workers had no interest in joining the union, thus cutting off much of his access to the rank and file. "From December, 1983, to May, 1984, she stopped paying me," Rivera says. "I was almost broke, borrowing from anyone I could. Turner would call me in and tell me, 'All I need is for you to sign a paper saying you were wrong.' When I refused, the people around her

"Tuesday nights are Ed's Kabuki League bowl-offs."

said, 'Well, we'll see how long you can hold out.' "

• •

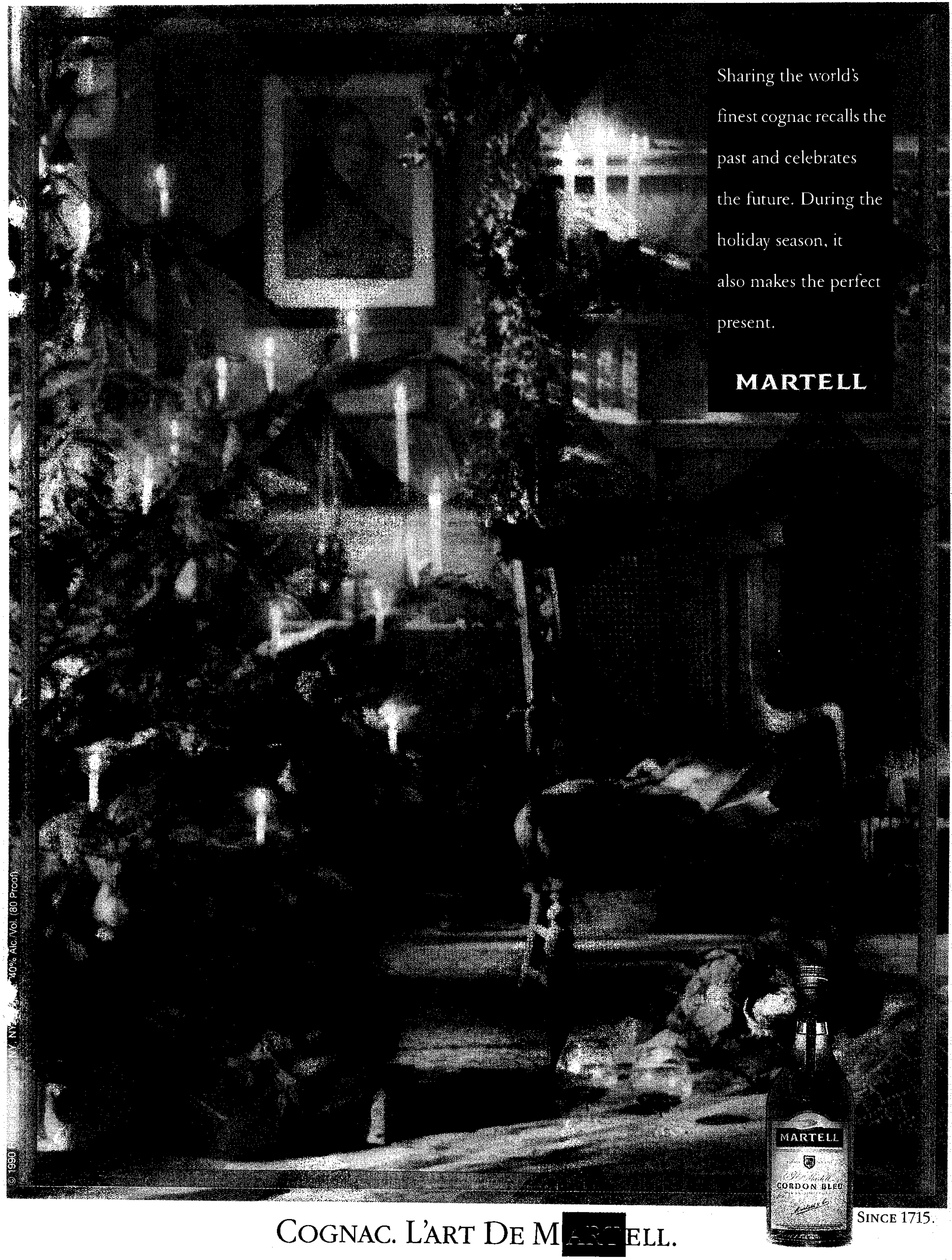
MORE than Turner's wounded feelings over the Puerto Rican union was at stake, however. The withholding of Rivera's pay began just after he, as an observer at the national union's 1983 convention in Philadelphia, helped to upset a bid by Turner to become president of the national union. Turner thereupon led 1199 out of the national union, thus putting an end to the national group's hopes for survival. (Out of funds, it gave up the ghost last year.) On Rivera's drive back from Philadelphia in a car with three other New York unionists, the idea of building a slate to challenge Turner's re-election as head of 1199 was born. The local's next regular election was in April, only five months off, and Turner's command of the many powers that had been vested in the office of president during Davis's years of centralization made the obstacles facing any rival slate formidable. Moreover, Turner remained immensely popular with large sections of the rank and file—especially those in the unskilled branches of the hospital workers' division, which was the group from which she came.

To map a strategy with some hope of success, Rivera held what turned out to be a crucial breakfast meeting with his closest friend, Bill Lynch, who was then the political-action director of a local of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. They concluded that the only real chance to stop Turner lay in a peculiarity of 1199's constitution. It provided that, no matter how big a margin of victory a candidate registered in the total vote, a runoff would be required if the candidate failed to carry a majority of the local's four divisions. The biggest of these was Turner's stronghold, the hospital division, which then embraced unskilled and semi-skilled employees in hospitals, nursing homes, and home-health-care agencies. (A constitutional change in 1987 resulting from the O'Connor-Jackson intercession subsequently made home-health-care workers a fifth division in their own right.) Of the three other divisions, Rivera and Lynch agreed that Turner was weakest in the so-called guild division—whose members were technicians, social workers, and other professional and office employees—and in the relatively small division representing skilled, mostly white registered nurses (in fact, Local 1199 is only now beginning to organize that group in systematic fashion). The fourth division was the drug division, which had once been the whole local but was now dwarfed by the health-care units. The anti-Turner forces felt that they should concentrate their limited resources on appeals to the guild and nurses' divisions.

A principal weapon in the attack on Turner was a paper called *Unity & Progress News*, which Rivera put out almost single-handedly in the weeks before the balloting. Ceaseless threats and harassment from the Turner faction caused some of his comrades in revolt to move out of the union, but Rivera did not falter even after Turner announced that she had won by a thirteen-thousand-vote margin. He and his group charged that the vote had been rigged to conceal a loss in both the guild division and the nurses' division. She ridiculed the charges, and clung to power while the Department of Labor limped through a two-year investigation.

Confirmation that the Turner forces had stolen the election did not come until the end of 1984, when one of the key insiders—David White, a vice-president in charge of the guild division—gave a sworn statement to government investigators which disclosed the sordid details. He asserted that union officers had formed a human chain to pass the sealed ballot boxes from the union auditorium to a conference room, and that there staff members assigned by Turner unlocked and emptied them. What happened next, as White testified under oath, is sketched in "Upheaval in the Quiet Zone," a chronicle of 1199 that was published last year by two historians, Leon Fink, of the University of North Carolina, and Brian Greenberg, of the Universi-

THE [redacted] OF CHRISTMAS.



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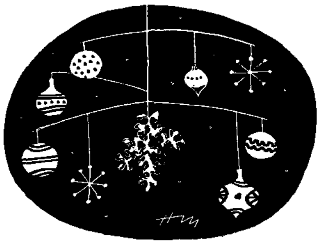
ty of Delaware. "Whenever we got a ballot for slate two [the opposition faction] we'd just throw that away and take a substitute ballot and mark a slate one and include that ballot. Now, you would leave some, because it would look funny if you took them all," White said. Discarded ballots were dumped into plastic garbage bags, and the ballot boxes, with their new contents, were returned to the auditorium, and were formally opened the next day. Three other participants in the fraud told similar stories to the Labor Department examiners, but not until April of 1986, two years after the original balloting, did the department get around to running a new election, under government supervision.



Turner remained in control of 1199 throughout that period, her perquisites and powers enhanced by a series of changes in the bylaws which she put through after the pilfered election. She stumbled badly, however, in her first major post-election test—the negotiation of a 1984 contract with the League of Voluntary Hospitals, the collective-bargaining arm for all the principal private hospitals and nursing homes in the metropolitan area. Multiple blunders in the planning and conduct of the contract talks led, on July 13th, to a disastrous forty-seven-day strike. Membership morale sank as one payless payday succeeded another with nothing constructive happening on the bargaining front. Everyone got a big lift on August 27th, when Turner informed twenty thousand members at a Madison Square Garden rally that the strike was ending with the union triumphant. The joy dissipated within a few days, however, for it quickly became known that no real contract had been signed and that the union had been obliged to make substantial sacrifices of past gains without getting anything more than it could have had without a strike.

Despite that disillusionment, the anti-Turnerites found defeatism spreading in their own circle, because of the snail-like pace of the Labor Department investigation. "People were getting very discouraged," Rivera says. "We used to have a meeting every Wednesday night in a storefront we rented for a hundred dollars a month at Eighty-eighth Street and Columbus Avenue, but attendance declined to the point where only three of us showed up for a meeting just before Thanksgiving, 1984, and we three started fighting with one another over whose fault it was. I, for one, was penniless. I had given my former wife sole rights to our house in Park Slope in exchange for my not paying alimony, and Doris had dropped me as an organizer."

At this dismal juncture, the oppositionists heard the good news of David White's defection from the Turner camp. His decision to tell all to the Labor Department grew out of the revulsion he felt at the public faking of the terms of the strike settlement in addition to the theft of the election. He told Fink and Greenberg that while 1199 members were receiving only twelve cents a day for marching in the picket line, members of Turner's staff entertained themselves with imported champagne in luxury hotel suites. "For the first time in my life, I was ashamed to look at the members," White said.

White's open break with Turner made Rivera decide that a coördinated public-relations assault was needed to speed up the inquiry and force a new election. He enlisted the aid of a seasoned P.R. man, Moe Foner, who had been the union's executive secretary through the Davis years and the initiator of many of its most highly praised community, civil-rights, and cultural activities. "Moe had been very cynical about us up to then," Rivera confides. "But he did agree to set a dramatic publicity program in motion for us. That got the story of the election fraud widely known. It also got the Labor Department moving."

Turner struck back vigorously. She retained a top-rated Washington public-relations consultant, with strong labor ties, to denounce her critics as racists and liars. The campaign against her was depicted as a desperation move by discredited pro-Communists to perpetuate white, paternalistic rule of the union. "They put ideology before trade unionism," Turner charged. She intensified her punitive drive against all who opposed her, and made Rivera a special target.

Bounced from the union payroll, he went to work on January 1, 1985, as a rank-and-filer at Beth Israel Medical

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Center, in lower Manhattan. He volunteered for duty as a transporter in the X-ray department—a rugged, two-hundred-and-seventy-dollar-a-week job that consisted of wheeling patients from floor to floor in all sections of the hospital. That kind of mobility gave Rivera a chance to proselytize among many of Beth Israel's three thousand unionized employees, but he was careful not to neglect his basic assignment. "Everyone thought I was the most fantastic worker," he says. "Then, on Friday, two months after I came, I was called to the office of the administrator of the X-ray department and told, 'You're fired.' I started crying. I had no income, no unemployment insurance. And, worse yet, being knocked out of my job meant I was no longer attached to the industry and couldn't run for union office again. It was the long hand of Doris Turner exerting pressure on management, and there was nothing I could do."

Through friends, however, Rivera got a job as janitor in a unionized nursing home in Syosset, Long Island. The train fare ate up almost all his salary, and once word of his new employment reached Turner's headquarters he was fired again. "I was turned down at scores of hospitals," he says. "They wouldn't touch me." Edward Kay, another victim of the Turner purge, still marvels at Rivera's capacity for withstanding privation throughout the long struggle. "He didn't have any money, but he never touched a nickel of the funds we raised to keep the opposition alive," Kay says.

The tide began to turn in September, 1985, when the Labor Department at last established rules and guidelines for a new election, to be held the following April. A rank-and-file convention arranged by Rivera and his confederates nominated a "Save Our Union" slate to depose Turner. In the belief that a black woman would have the best chance against Turner, the rebels reached out for a relatively obscure member of their group—Georgianna Johnson, a black social-work assistant—and she campaigned for the presidency on a racially balanced ticket: it included Rivera for executive vice-president, three other Hispanics, five other blacks, and three whites. Davis came out of retirement in Florida to endorse the challengers, all of whom extolled the policies and practices of his that had brought 1199 its success. New

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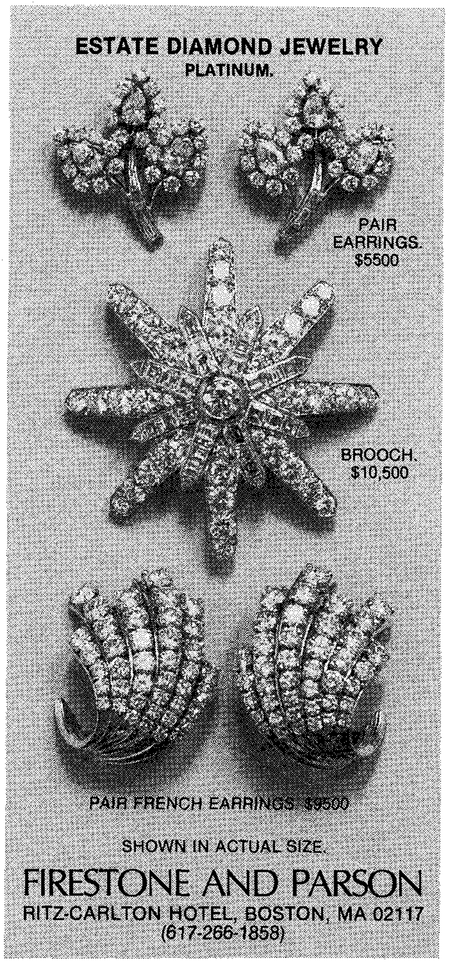

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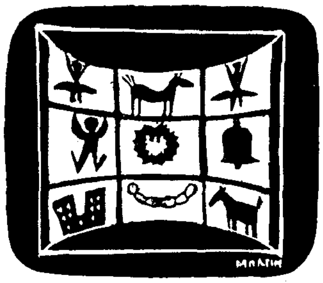
difficulties arose around Turner, but the government-monitored election showed that her grip on the affection of many hospital workers remained firm. More members than ever before cast ballots, and Johnson squeaked through to victory by a margin of only 2,933 votes, out of 35,011 cast.

That comparatively narrow win, unfortunately, didn't put an end to the intra-union conflict. Certification of the results was held up for two months while the Labor Department looked into a formal challenge by Turner, and Rivera had to go to Washington to invoke the aid of congressional oversight committees before that roadblock was removed. Then, after the installation of the new officials, pleas for unity were addressed to the members by Coretta Scott King, Governor Cuomo, Jesse Jackson, and other distinguished citizens, but their urging did not deter disrupters from breaking up delegate meetings with shouted calls for restoration of the Turner regime.



When the time came to negotiate the 1986 contract covering the city's hospitals, the bargainers for the League of Voluntary Hospitals sought to shore up the new union leadership by adopting a conciliatory attitude. They were well aware that the unhealed division within 1199, coupled with the rank and file's vivid memories of the long strike two years before, gave management unusual leverage to force a settlement on its own terms, but nudges from the Governor's office helped keep the contract talks amicable, and the new pact made real the promised five-per-cent pay increase that had evaporated into thin air after being announced by Turner as a high point of the fictional 1984 settlement. In addition to that "back pay," the accord gave the workers thirteen per cent in additional pay increases over the next three years.

Rivera expressed hope that the peaceful outcome of the contract talks would provide time to rebuild the union, but within a year it became plain that there was almost as much discontent within Johnson's palace guard as there was among the Turner diehards. "Georgianna was the nicest kind of person," Rivera says. "She was harmonious, in contrast to all of us strong personalities, but when she became president she liked the ceremonial parts of the job, not the decision-making."

A vacuum developed in the union's leadership, to the dismay of the other officers elected on the Save Our Union ticket, but no plan of action began to emerge until February of 1988. At that time, the local's executive council, whose meetings Johnson had stopped attending, held a daylong session to consider ways of checking the union's downward drift. Johnson's term still had more than a year to run, but the council decided that it was not too early to start putting together a new slate to compete against her in April, 1989. Out of a three-month series of discussions involving the full staff, of three hundred and twenty, and scores of rank-and-file activists came a consensus on the designation of Rivera as standard-bearer in the drive to replace Johnson.

"It was basically not a strongly contested election," Rivera says. "Johnson went into her shell. She had no machine and very little support. We stayed away from personal attacks on her. There was no need for them, and we felt they would only tarnish our image and keep alive the internal enmities we wanted to extinguish." When the vote was taken, the members showed none of the indecision that had clouded the verdict in the Turner-Johnson duel three years before. Rivera won by a nine-to-one ratio—an almost incredible result in any union where a president is running for reëlection, with all the built-in advantages of incumbency. In his victory statement Rivera stressed reunification. "The people are tired of division and bickering," he said.

HOW Rivera would use his knowledge of unionism and the personal philosophy he had evolved to bring about change in Local 1199—and perhaps in the broader canvas of America's labor movement as well—was about to get its first exhibition. The calendar compelled him to begin bargaining for a new master contract with the League of Voluntary Hospitals just three days after he took office, on May 1, 1989. From the outset of what would be a taxing ordeal for both sides, Rivera surprised the representatives of fifty-three nonprofit hospitals and nursing homes by proving himself a superb tactician in the Byzantine worlds of politics and public relations, New York style. To the astonishment of virtually everyone, including his own people, his deftness in manipulating these unfamiliar instruments of power quickly reversed an imbalance in strength that the hospitals, which were facing mushrooming expenditures and, in some instances, possible bankruptcy, had relied on to give them the upper hand at the bargaining table.

Rivera's initial approach was in the direction of peace, not war. He met privately with ranking hospital officials in an attempt to convince them that a mutual-assistance pact made more sense for both sides than a test of staying power in an extended economic duel. The additional financial burden that an equitable labor agreement would entail, he argued, was only one element—and by no means the most consequential one—of the financial hardships the institutions faced. They were already in desperate need of additional money from the state to relieve the squeeze put on them by their having to care for tens of thousands of poor patients not covered by any form of health insurance. Rivera proposed that the hospitals and the union pool their forces to persuade Governor Cuomo and the legislature that the only way this need could be met which was in the public interest was through swift enactment of a system of universal health insurance. To assure more efficient use of public funds, he suggested, such a system could be coupled with a comprehensive rationalization and restructuring of the health-care-delivery system.

The hospitals rejected a joint lobbying effort, partly because the state's own budget crunch made fast relief extremely unlikely, and also because experience had taught them that the ramifications of the state's reimbursement rules made it impossible to be sure that Albany would not take away with one hand as much as it gave with the other.

Rivera's next step was a blitz campaign to disabuse the hospitals of any notion that the union, despite its bruising internal battles, had become a paper tiger. He was positive that the rank and file, fed up with factionalism, would welcome the chance to give all-out support to the 1199 bargaining team. Through one-on-one meetings with key unionists and personal exhortations at chapter rallies all over the city, Rivera spread the gospel that no goal was unattainable in the contract talks if the members demonstrated their determination to stand together. The response was electrifying. Unionists who had been snarling at one another for years closed ranks behind their new chief.

He tested the solidity of their resolve by winning delegate approval for three citywide mini-strikes in July and August, each to last from one to three days. This controlled mechanism for displaying their militancy so pleased the members that they did not stop with sacrificing pay to stay off the job and demonstrate outside their own hospitals: thousands lined up behind Rivera and his longtime friend Jesse Jackson for mass marches through midtown Manhattan to picket the hospital league's headquarters, on West Fifty-seventh Street. Richard Trumka, the president of the United Mine Workers, whose members were striking against

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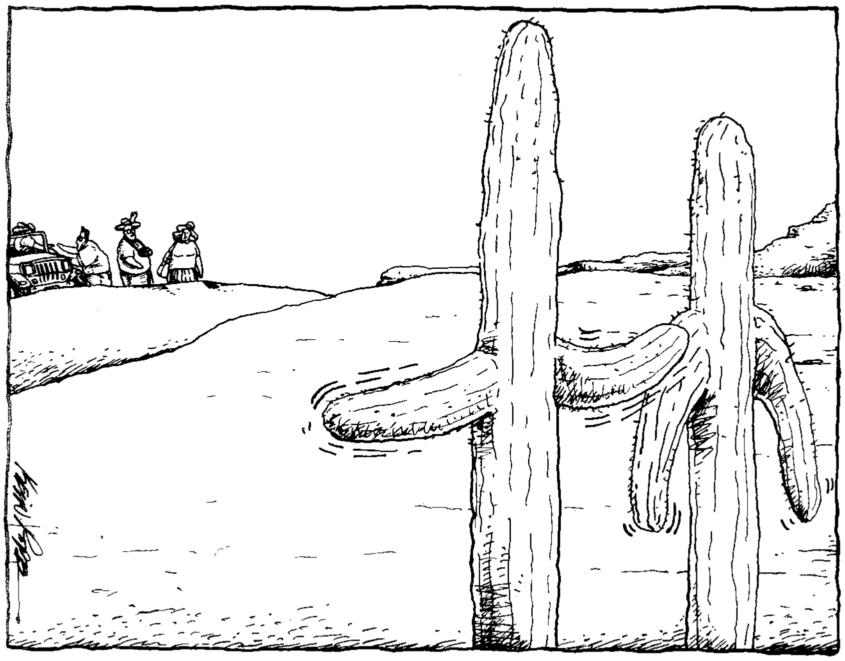

"Arms up, Here come the tourists."

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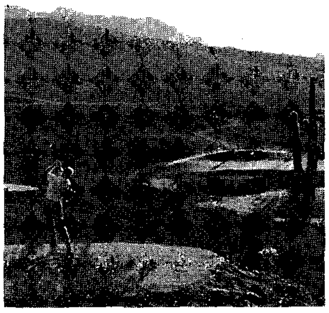

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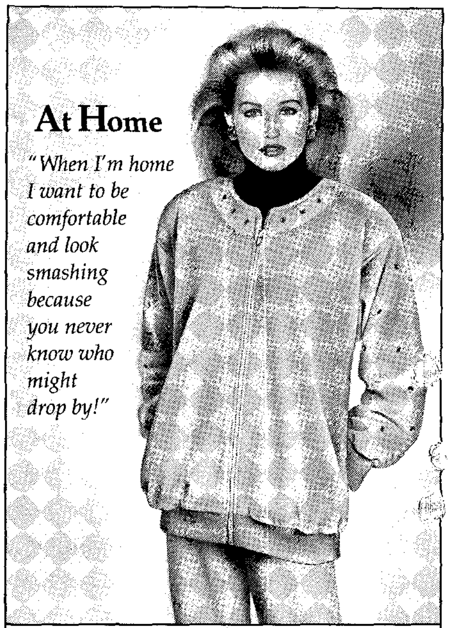
the Pittston Company, joined the picket line, and so did union leaders and rank-and-filers bearing signs that trumpeted their walkouts against Eastern Air Lines and NYNEX. It had been more than a decade since New York had seen any comparable flexing of union muscle against management.

The mini-strikes, all aimed at proving that Local 1199 would not shrink from a full-scale stoppage if management remained adamant, went forward against a background of carefully planned maneuvers by Rivera to employ against the hospitals the very divide-and-conquer strategy they had hoped to use against the union.

The union got its first breakthrough exactly a week after the league contract expired, on June 30th, with the negotiations deadlocked. Five Roman Catholic hospitals and nursing homes, which ordinarily take a back seat and allow the league to set a new over-all pattern for hospital wages and benefits, decided to act on their own this time. They agreed to two-year contracts providing annual pay increases of eight and a half per cent for their employees, who numbered forty-two hundred. The pacts meant immediate raises of between thirty and sixty dollars a week for X-ray technicians, cooks, nurses' aides, orderlies, and similar classes of unionized workers. Also included were provisions for creating small, pilot day-care programs for the workers' children and a commitment by the state's Department of Health to supply funds equal to one per cent of the payroll for training designed to upgrade the job skills of 1199 members.

The Catholic institutions' decision to take the lead did not come out of the blue. It arose from the personal philosophy of Cardinal O'Connor as well as the admiration for Rivera that the prelate had developed two years earlier, when Rivera brought him and Jesse Jackson together to spearhead the campaign for higher pay for home-health-care workers. (The Cardinal's father had been a stalwart in the Philadelphia branch of the United Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators.) In a talk I had with the Cardinal months after the signing of the hospital agreement, he told me that even before the negotiations began he had let the priests and lawyers who were going to represent the archdiocese know that they were not to strive for the cheapest contract possible but, rather, to aim for one that



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would give the workers the most generous increases the hospitals could afford without overstraining their resources or imperilling the quality of medical care. "My principle for all labor negotiations, whether they involve our schools, our hospitals, our cemeteries, or anything else, is that it is our duty to do the best we can possibly do to meet the needs of the workers without bankrupting our institutions," he said. "That is not a cliché with me. It is probably something I got from my father. My admonition to all our negotiators is to remember: 'Your side of New York is not an industry, not a business. We don't keep our institutions open to make money. We are a charity dependent on the good will and contributions and support of the community. You will get no praise from me—on the contrary, you will get censure—if you come back and say you got the lowest contract you could. I want you to give the highest dollar our calculations show we can give. You can't go thirty cents above that, but I don't want you to go below it.' "

During the hospital negotiations, the Cardinal got a weekend call from his representatives, who were meeting with the union representatives at the Waldorf-Astoria. They said that an impasse had been reached and the union negotiators wanted to meet personally with him. "I have been advised that I ought to stay out of negotiations, that it is not a good idea to get personally involved," the Cardinal told me. "But I haven't taken good advice since I was four or five, so I invited them to come over early on a Sunday afternoon. I met at my residence with Dennis and the union's lawyer, Basil Paterson, and with the priest and the lawyer who were representing the archdiocese. Within a few minutes, we arrived at a basis for agreement. Then they went back to the Waldorf-Astoria and wrapped up the details within an hour."

When I asked the Cardinal whether he was concerned about pulling the props out from under the bargaining position of the general hospitals, he replied, "I know that what we did was not popular with the League of Voluntary Hospitals. I was not out to destroy it. The league has to do what it thinks is just. But I can't let the principles and policies of the Catholic Church be contingent on what others do within their perspective."

The Cardinal's high regard for Rivera

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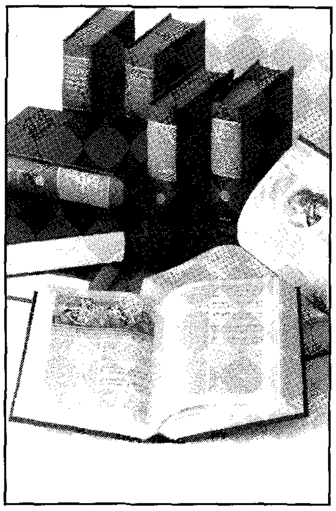

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was strengthened by the negotiations. "He has given every evidence in my dealings with him that he is a very decent man, a man of integrity and high principles," he said. "If he maintains that posture, the sky is the limit for the beneficial influence he can have on the labor movement and, in that sense, on the country. I think he can become one of the great labor leaders in the United States. I have told him, 'There are people who will try to use you, to exploit you, to corrupt you and make you crooked. If you live up to your potential, you can do much to benefit all working people. If you let yourself be corrupted, you can destroy the labor movement.' "

Rivera made it plain to the bargainers for the league that they would be expected to accept the Catholic pact as a pattern, but he was not surprised when they did not rush to comply. It was at this point that the union staged the first of its mini-strikes—a one-day stoppage—and went into high gear on a supporting campaign of political and public-relations pressure. The political aspects were made particularly ticklish by the overlap of the union's contract drive with its immersion in the mayoral campaign as an ardent backer of David Dinkins. Rivera had been by all accounts the most influential of New York's labor leaders in persuading Dinkins to run in the first place. In the campaign, the support of Rivera and Local 1199 became so important that the candidate established his campaign headquarters at 300 West Forty-third Street—the building next door to the union's. Rivera's emphasis this time was on being a team player—on working within the mainstream of New York's usually hopelessly fragmented labor movement to weld total unity behind Dinkins in his effort to take the Democratic nomination away from Koch, running for a fourth term. For Rivera, the campaign's conjunction with the hospital negotiations created a problem that went beyond finding enough time for both. He knew that a full-fledged walkout by Local 1199 before the primary would confront Dinkins with a potentially embarrassing dilemma that might cost him the nomination. If he backed the union at the very time all labor was backing him, it might feed charges by Koch and others that Dinkins could not be trusted to stand up to the civil-service unions in the tough 1990 round of negotiations—negotiations that would clearly require

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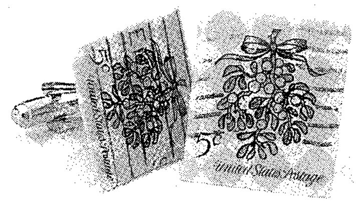

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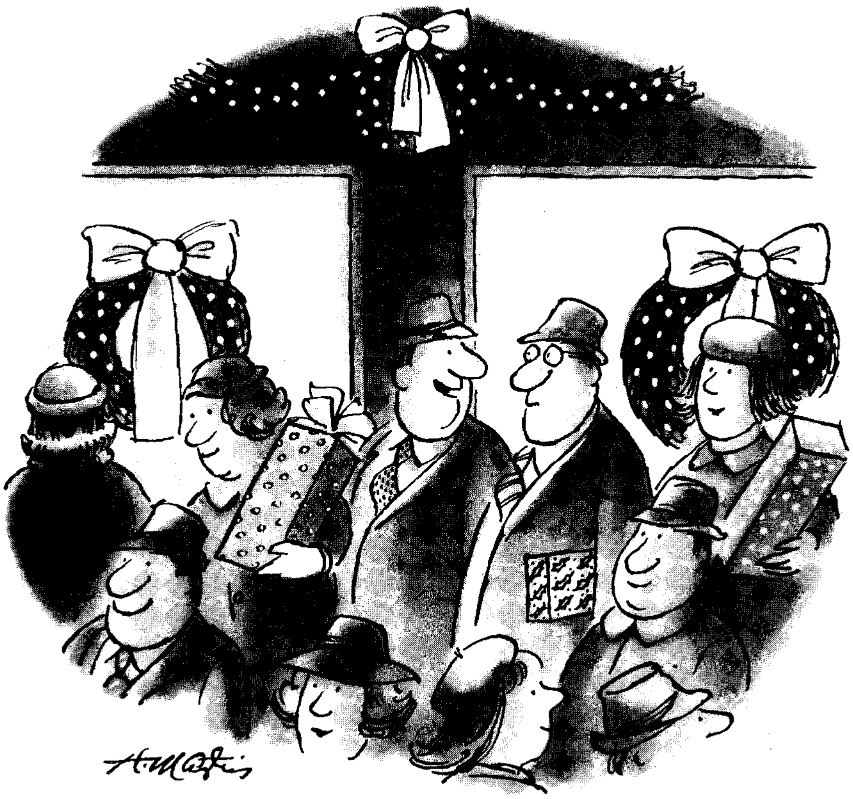

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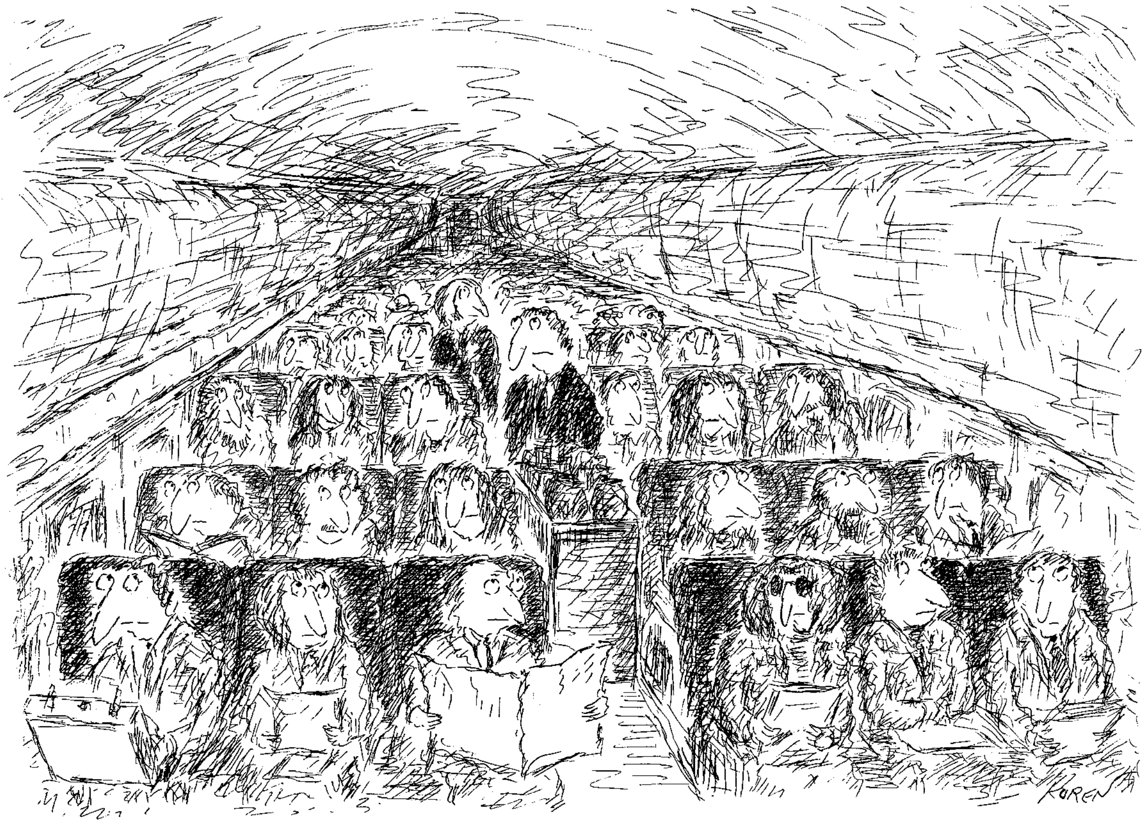

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extreme frugality in the doling out of scarce municipal funds. Rivera's private advice to Dinkins was to stay out of any high-visibility role in the tug-of-war between the hospitals and 1199. Rivera's strategy of building up cumulative pressure on management while he avoided fixing a deadline for an all-out strike made it easier for Dinkins to maintain that above-the-battle posture. However, when the September primary passed with Dinkins the winner and the hospitals still holding on to their refusal to match the Catholic settlement of early July, Rivera reluctantly concluded that no worthwhile movement would take place unless the union forced a showdown by setting a date for the use of its most potent economic weapon.

The executive council authorized a referendum among the members on approving October 4th, a month before the general election, as the date for a make-or-break strike—this one open-ended. Unfazed by memories of the gruelling 1984 strike and its profitless outcome, the rank and file voted ten to one in favor of a total stoppage if no satisfactory contract had emerged by October 4th. At that point, the only way for the union to make sure that Dinkins could gracefully stay off the spot was the way most consistent with the welfare of the union's members: by drawing on every resource and wile at the union's command to crack the hospital league and obtain an acceptable agreement before the deadline.

The League of Voluntary Hospitals remained firm as the strike date approached. A glimmer of hope had shone through just before the last of the mini-strikes, in mid-August, but it vanished almost as quickly as it appeared. "We were looking for a hospital leader who could speak with more authority than the nominal bargainers for the league," Rivera says. "We were told that Dr. Spencer Foreman, the chief executive officer of Montefiore, was a take-charge guy important in shaping policy for management. We set up a secret breakfast meeting between him and me in a suite at the Park Lane on a Saturday morning ten days before the last three-day stoppage. We talked for two hours, and he told me the league couldn't live with the Catholic settlement, because its rollover effect on the total payroll of its hospitals would be too great. He said that it could do as well in money for our people if we reduced the percentages of direct-wage increases and put more of the settlement into bonuses.

"That called for a big adjustment in my thinking, because up to then I had been insisting that the two agreements had to be identical. After thinking it over, I told Foreman we were ready to revise the package as long as our members didn't lose by the deal. When that answer seemed to sit well with him, I said, 'That's fine. Then we can settle the whole thing here and now.' He held up his hand and said that that wouldn't be possible. 'There's a certain dance you have to go through,' he said. 'You and I can't sit here alone in this hotel suite and make a deal. It must all be part of a process in which all the actors are involved.'

"I didn't see much logic in that, but he insisted, so we set up a meeting for the following Wednesday, at which Basil Paterson and I represented 1199 and Foreman and William Abelow—the league's president and chief negotiator—were there for management. Paterson repeated what I had said about our readiness to move away from the Catholic settlement and make a deal based on percentage plus bonuses. That seemed agreeable to them, and I left convinced that we would have a contract before the three-day stoppage five days hence. Instead, when we got back into formal bargaining they were standing on their old offer. I asked Abelow to bring in Foreman, but he didn't come. I regarded that as a complete betrayal, and withdrew my offer to consider a revised package. We went back to insisting on a league contract identical with the Catholics'."

Foreman feels that a misunderstanding about his role at the meeting accounted for Rivera's sense of letdown. The purpose of the conference, as

Foreman understood it, was not to arrive at a deal but to establish a framework for bargaining that would lead to an agreement. "I was there primarily to listen and to communicate some general ideas about why the league considered it impossible to adopt the archdiocese's formula without modification," he said. "What accounted for the problem, to a considerable extent, was that we missed one another's signals. Dennis thought he had a deal, we thought we had a process leading to a deal. The result of that misunderstanding was a lot of unfortunate bitterness and ill will that none of us wanted."

AT the end of September, only three minor hospitals had broken away to accept terms basically the same as the ones that the Catholic institutions had agreed to in the first week of July. The union took costly advertisements in the city's newspapers to swing the public to its side. A broadside signed by scores of doctors and registered nurses on the staffs of league hospitals asked, "What's it going to take to provide you with the best health care possible?" The answer was a contract that would address the "just complaints" of the workers and also meet the needs of the overcrowded, understaffed hospitals through citywide acceptance of the Catholic pattern.

There was no immediate outward sign that the union's public-relations barrage was softening resistance within the league. Behind the scenes, however, intense questioning of the league's position was under way in a teaching hospital that many union people had regarded as a Gibraltar of the hard-line forces—Presbyterian Hospital, the cornerstone of the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, in Washington Heights, whose president and chief executive officer was Dr. Thomas Q. Morris, the chairman of the League of Voluntary Hospitals.

Presbyterian's board of trustees had elected a new chairman in July, just as the contract negotiations with the union were beginning to ice over. He was Seymour Milstein, a member of a wealthy real-estate family that had recently given the hospital twenty-five million dollars to help finance construction of a new ten-story building, overlooking the Hudson. An activist by temperament, Milstein quickly became convinced that the league board was taking too passive a role in dealing with

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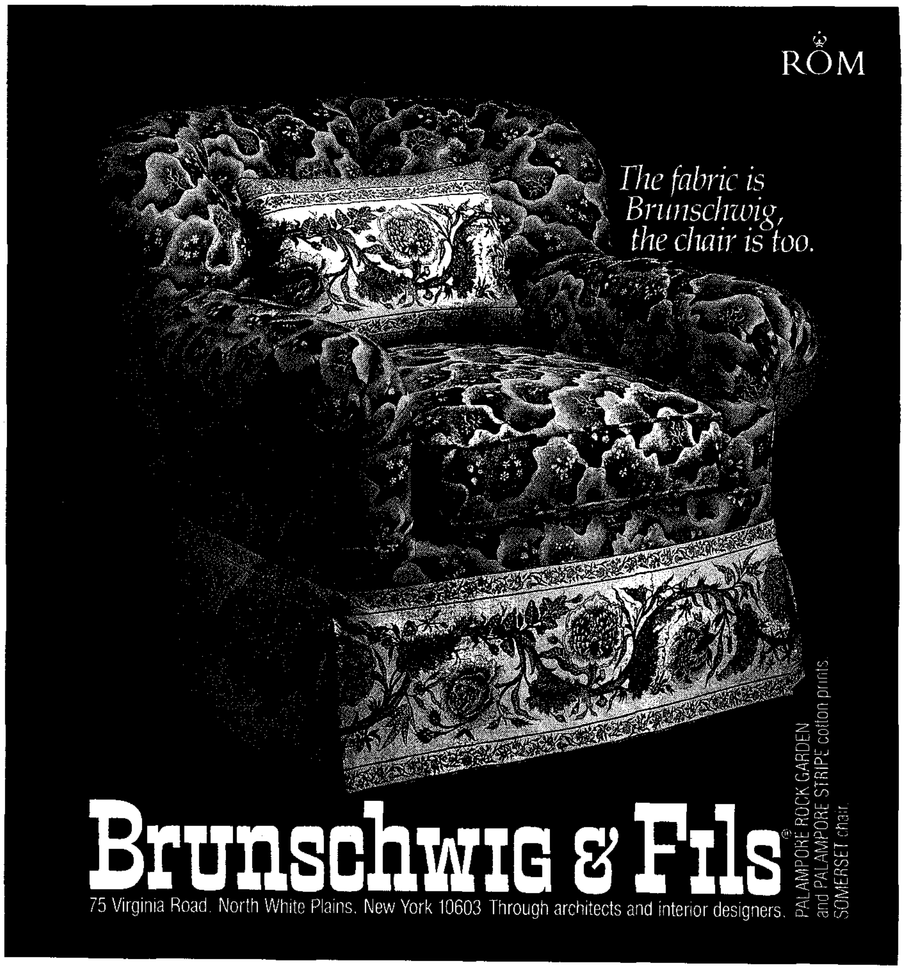
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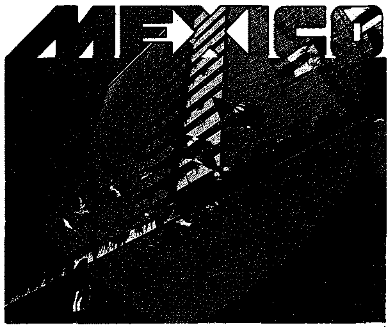

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the manifold problems currently converting most New York hospitals into potential bankrupts. Presbyterian itself was losing fifty million dollars a year—a deficit rate that had dissipated nearly all of a hundred-and-sixty-million-dollar endowment in the past decade.

For expert counsel Milstein turned to Dr. Martin Cherkasky, a former executive director of Montefiore Hospital, who in that capacity had given Local 1199 its first hospital contract, in 1958, when all the other big hospitals were girding for battle on the strike front. Milstein had started looking to Cherkasky as a mentor more than a quarter century earlier, when he himself was the chairman of Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, a poor neighbor of Montefiore. Though Cherkasky had now retired from the kind of direct oversight of the city's medical facilities which he once exercised—he had been Health Services Administrator in the Lindsay administration—he was familiar enough with the current scene to be distressed by the stand that the hospitals were taking in the contract talks. He told Milstein that it was senseless to go to war with the union over a sum unlikely to exceed one or one and a half per cent of payroll when Presbyterian was "bleeding by tens of millions and losing many of its best people." The central problem, in Cherkasky's view, was winning more money from the state, and in that endeavor the best ally that all the hospitals could have was the union.

On his own board, Milstein found, others shared his misgivings about letting the contract impasse go to a strike. One of his fellow-trustees, William F. Laporte, who was a retired chairman of the American Home Products Corporation, was in a particularly good position to assist in clarifying the board's evaluation of the situation. His company had long had contracts with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, Local 1199's parent. Through that union's president, Lenore Miller, a meeting was set up five days before the strike deadline at which Milstein, Laporte, and two of Morris's ranking aides talked privately with Rivera and Miller. Morris, the chief of both the hospital and the league, did not attend. His secretary told Milstein that he was out of town and had left no number at which he could be reached.

Milstein opened the meeting by declaring that he intended to inform Morris and, through him, the hospital league that it had been held. Rivera's first remark was a flat assertion that "Presbyterian Hospital is anti-union."

Milstein refused to let that pass. "What do you mean, anti-union?" he demanded. "We're losing fifty million dollars a year. Have we fired one of your people? We have a real problem of survival."

When Rivera said rumors were rampant that Presbyterian planned drastic staff cuts, Milstein's rejoinder was that layoffs were inevitable if the hospital did not get more funds from the state—a quest in which it needed and wanted the union's help.

After that clearing of the air, things went better. Rivera moved in one easy glide from combativeness to conciliation. Milstein found him "bright, reasonable, and realistic." Miller contributed to smoothing the waters by saying that the unionists recognized the delicacy of the situation the Presbyterian trustees were placed in by Morris's position with the league, but she emphasized that a strike would be a disaster all around. When the conferees got to nuts and bolts, the contract figures they arrived at represented a slight comedown from the eight-and-a-half-per-cent increases in the agreement that the union had with the Catholic institutions.

The league's leaders had a meeting scheduled for the following Monday, forty-eight hours before the strike deadline. Milstein and Laporte told Rivera that they could not bind the absent Morris to recommend the compromise to the league but would strongly urge him to do so.

"The league, in its infinite wisdom, turned the proposal down," Milstein told me later. He met with the executive committee of his own board the next morning, just one day before the threatened walkout, to consider independent ratification. At that session, Milstein set forth his reasons for believing that the figures he had hammered out with Rivera were the best ones Presbyterian could get, with or without a strike, and that both the institution and the union would benefit from approaching the state as a team dedicated to obtaining the funds that were needed to provide improved health care for all New Yorkers. The trustees voted unanimously to go it alone. Morris was asked before the vote whether, if he had been at the private meeting with Rivera, he would have accepted the compromise. His reply, according to Milstein, was that he would not have opposed it. However, such enthusiasm as Morris may have had for the deal was clearly limited. He has steadfastly refused requests for a public statement of his views, and in January he resigned as Presbyterian's president and chief executive officer.

The capitulation of an institution that had previously been a redoubt of resistance brought a rush by other hospitals to sign with 1199. Chief among them was Beth Israel, another pillar of the league. Its president, Dr. Robert G. Newman, made a personal plea to the league's executive committee to settle on the same terms as Presbyterian, but the answer was no. By that time, the union's phones were so busy with hospitals seeking to sign independently that the local couldn't find enough people to handle them.

At 3:30 A.M. on October 4th, just ninety minutes before the strike deadline, the league's top officials decided that the tide for surrender was too strong to resist. They persuaded the union to stop the clock while contract minutiae were thrashed out, and at 6:20 A.M. Rivera and Basil Paterson were able to report to the local's hundred-and-ten-member negotiating committee a league offer only microscopically different from the settlement agreed on at Presbyterian. The committee unanimously approved the proposal after Paterson called it fair and added, "Never again in our time will we see this union disrespected at the bargaining table." Rivera told the cheering rank-and-file representatives, "You can walk away tall, with your heads high."

Essentially, the final settlement called for raises just one per cent below the standard set in the pact that Cardinal O'Connor had authorized for the Catholic institutions three months earlier. In both cases, roughly one-third of the higher cost to management was offset by a temporary suspension of employer payments into the union's pension reserves. For the average hospital worker, earning in the neighborhood of three hundred and fifty dollars a week, the contract would mean weekly pay increases totalling more than seventy dollars by mid-1991, exclusive of a five-hundred-dollar bonus to be paid in that year. "The most wonderful

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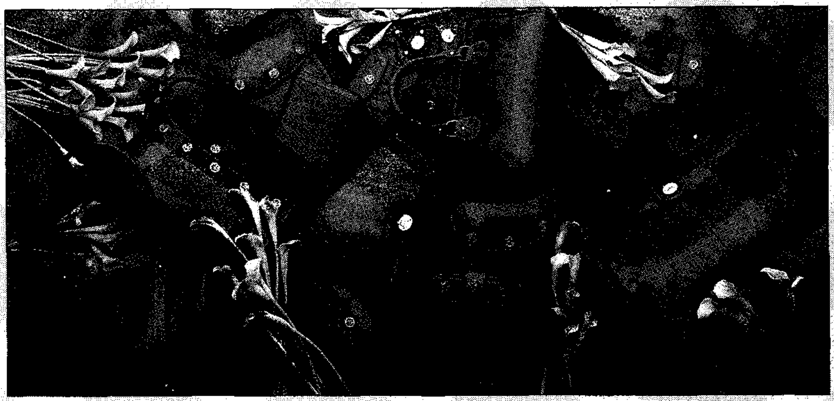

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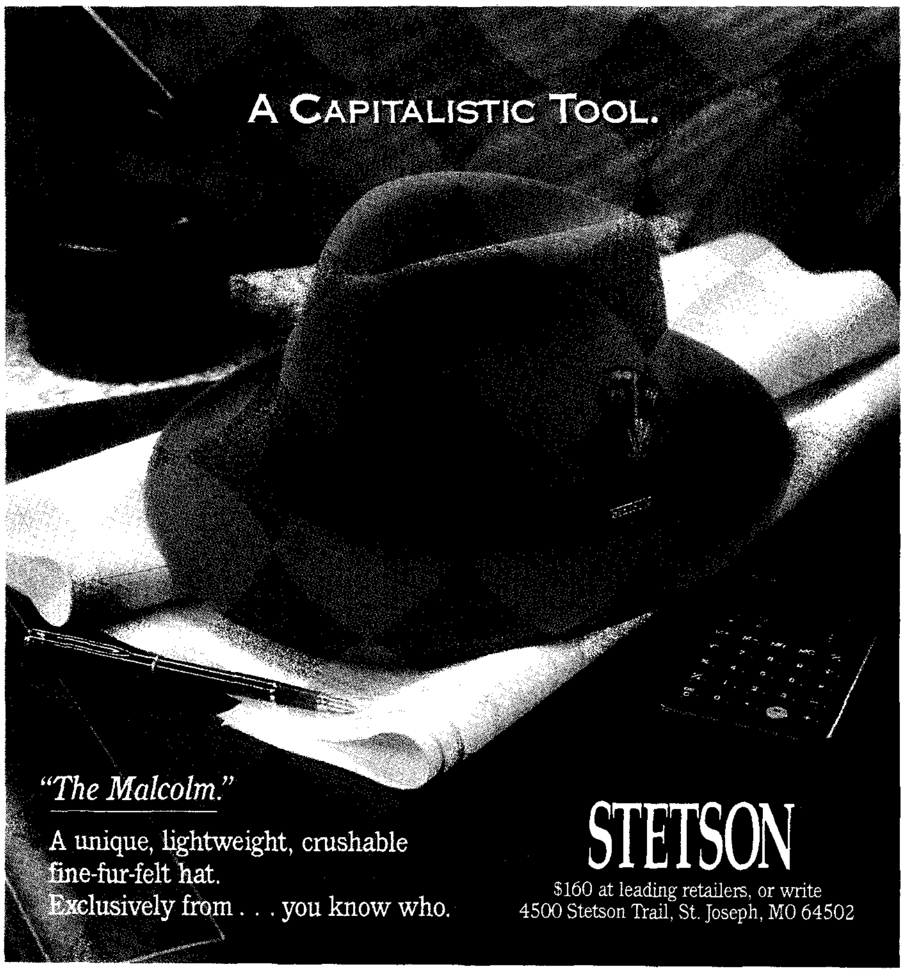

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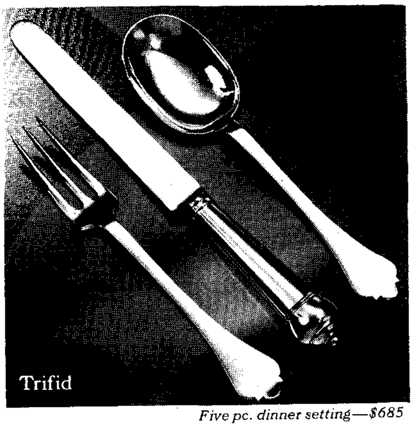

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thing is we won respect from management," said one enthusiastic rank-and-filer, Jerry Myers, a telephone operator at Mt. Sinai.

FOR Rivera, the contract victory was not an occasion for gloating, or for revelling in media adulation. Rather, he saw it as a means of furthering two of 1199's primary aims: the organization into the union of more than two hundred thousand New York health-care workers still outside its ranks, and legislative enactment of a program of health insurance for all New Yorkers, two and a half million of whom were unprotected by any form of insurance.

The way in which Rivera has been concentrating on these twin objectives in the months since the settlement reveals his leadership style to be a mixture of exhaustive planning, close attention to detail, and go-for-broke impulsiveness. At an executive-committee meeting at the offices of the local's attorneys in late November of 1989, for instance, the main business was consideration of a Rivera plan to restructure the local in a fashion that would return considerable responsibility to the rank and file, and thus revitalize decision-making processes that had become more bureaucratic than democratic.

Rivera relied on a favorite technique of his for making certain that everyone knows what has been agreed upon, which is to set up an easel with a huge flip-over pad of white paper and to note in black, green, or red marking pen the points under discussion and what disposition has been made of each. He and his executive assistant, Kay Anderson, charted the functions that might appropriately be assigned to area directors and organizers. Everyone had ideas to offer, including many that disagreed with Rivera's. Among the questions he had to grapple with in a detailed "Plan of Work" he was drawing up, which was to be submitted to the delegates and the full membership, were how to avoid the development of fiefdoms within the union and how to get rid of bad work habits and attitudes that many of the union's staff members had succumbed to in the slothful years of division. "There was a time when we knew what was happening in every section of the union," Rivera said. "We should get back to that."

At the same meeting, Rivera raised a more sensitive subject, on which, he said, he had been having second thoughts since the committee acted on it at a previous meeting—a proposal to the rank and file that monthly dues be doubled over two years. Rivera considered the increase essential—he hadn't changed his mind about that. Raising dues is always one of the most disagreeable tasks that any union administration must undertake. No matter how sizable the wage-and-benefit increases it has delivered to its membership, it can expect backbiting whenever it is obliged to ask for more money to meet the union's bills. In million-member international unions, the ill will stirred up by decisions to boost dues has enabled insurgents to dislodge leaders who seemed invulnerable to successful challenge.

Rivera said he was worried that the leadership had moved too hastily in approving a proposed procedure for breaking the bad news to the dues payers. The plan had been to announce the new dues schedule in the next issue of the union's monthly paper, but now he recommended that that plan be cancelled and a two-week survey of membership attitudes toward the union and its programs lead up to an ambitious educational campaign, in which it would be explained at meetings in every chapter why the union needed the extra money. "Let's not drift into this thing," Rivera said. "We can't count on knee-jerk approval. We must have adequate staff adequately informed if we're to assure a big vote for the increase."

There was no authoritarianism in his broaching of the revised plan. The whole meeting had the atmosphere of a seminar, with Rivera sitting at the foot of an oval conference table, chin propped on bent left arm, right leg stretched on the table. The other committee members, most of them women, made suggestions about how the sales effort could be pepped up. The consensus was that secret-ballot votes on whether or not to raise dues should be held in the last two weeks of January, following intensive educational meetings at all hospitals and nursing homes.

THE drive to put across the dues increase kept Rivera busy day and night through most of January. He went from hospital to hospital, all over the city, and, in doing so, quickly discovered the accuracy of his warning to his organizers that the raise would be a

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hard sell. Wherever he went, members got up to challenge the proposed increase—from fifteen dollars a month to thirty dollars—as too big. No matter how often the point was made, he never cut anybody off. Instead, he would pick up a piece of chalk and scribble on a blackboard the key figures documenting the seriousness of the union's fiscal problem.

In the secret-ballot vote, finally held in February, the increase passed decisively—a measure of the trust that most members had in Rivera. That realization was borne in on me in random conversations I had with rank-and-filers at a half-dozen institutions while the dues campaign was on. One of my talks was with Alicia Gaud, who has put in twenty-six years as a housekeeper at Mt. Sinai. She was earning fifty-four dollars a week when she started, in July, 1964, and now makes four hundred and thirty dollars. "I pray to God that Dennis stays with us," she said. "What I like about him is that he doesn't get a swelled head. He talks to all of us like one of us. We've made great progress under him—a nice contract with no strike." Ivory Jefferson, a mover in the Mt. Sinai building-service department, whose weekly salary has gone from a hundred and fifty dollars to four hundred and twenty dollars in his nineteen years at Mt. Sinai, was another Rivera booster. "He's doing a terrific job," he said. "The union has got much stronger under his leadership. We have our pride back, and management has a lot of respect for us. We had lost that. We also have our dignity."

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A by-product of the membership's approval of higher dues—though it was not a sales point made in the educational campaign—was a pay raise for the local's officers and staff, from Rivera on down, bringing his weekly salary to its current level: nine hundred and twenty-six dollars, plus seventy-five dollars for expenses.

Local 1199 is one of the few unions left that still actively seek to prevent the compensation of their officers from climbing far above the standards the unions' contracts fix for the best-paid of the rank and file. "Leaders who focus on perquisites for themselves tend to lose touch with their members," Rivera says. "Keeping officers' salaries in line with the members' is a way of understanding and identifying with their problems. I am amazed at how many leaders of unions, large and small, are making a hundred thousand dollars a year and more. For tiny locals to pay tremendous sums of money to the people who run them is just disgusting."

Many other aspects of today's labor movement disgust Rivera, but he is unwontedly circumspect in discussing them. Dissidents have never been popular in the upper echelons of unionism. Solidarity is the watchword, and in the view of the union establishment few offenses are more horrendous than speaking out openly against the deadhead practices to be found in a lot of current labor operations. One of the most frequent pieces of advice Rivera gets from the leaders of other New York unions, with whom he has built warm alliances in the last year, is that he can best advance the interests of 1199 by being a team player, and not pressing insistently and impatiently for change.

Such advice has particular pertinence for Rivera, because his experience in 1199's battle for a new hospital contract, in the forging of united labor support for Dinkins, and in the broad-based fight the local is now making for universal health insurance has underscored the degree of his union's dependence on coalitions that embrace all labor and the outside community as well.

Unfortunately, Rivera's revulsion against the internal failings he considers responsible for much of labor's low estate is so intense that it sometimes triumphs over his recognition that the prudent course is to hold his tongue and let his deeds speak for him. Recently, for example, he was invited to address a conference of editors of union papers, and quickly alienated most of them by declaring that their biggest fault was to use their publications to puff up their leaders and ignore what was wrong with their unions.

"Labor is in crisis; things are not going well," he says. "The way to make things better, I believe, is not to talk about what ought to be done but to lead by example. That is what we are trying to do in 1199. I have to be successful in keeping it united, in bringing new members into it, and in expanding rank-and-file involvement in it. To the extent that we show results, we will gain influence in activating the whole movement and showing that labor is not irrelevant."

As part of Rivera's strategy to set an example for the reform of all labor by making 1199 a model union, he has spent many hours in the past year thinking through, refining, and discussing with the local's executive committee the innovative "Plan of Work," which is intended to define 1199's principal objectives for the next two years. Chief among them is making the union "the most important institution" in its members' lives, by vesting much responsibility in rank-and-file members who show a talent and a desire for exercising leadership. To this end, the plan redefines the function of organizers so as to relieve them of routine duties related to the handling of day-to-day grievances, which now occupy much of their time. Under Rivera's blueprint, a new category of rank-and-file representatives, called "floor captains," would take over most of that function, leaving the organizers free to recruit workers who are not now members of 1199.

After distributing the plan to fifteen thousand officers and activist members of 1199, however, Rivera became painfully aware that even in his own reformist bailiwick many staff members resist any change that they see as diminishing their status and authority. "Some sections of the bureaucracy, especially the organizers, felt undermined by the proposed transfer of power," he told me. "The rank and file loved it, but the staff felt threatened. They feared that it would diminish their roles and build up potential rivals for union office. A lot of it was just fear of the unknown." He paused, and then went on, "It's taking more time to implement than I thought, but we're moving with it."

RIVERA's role in the *News* strike began three days after some of the paper's drivers stormed out of a printing plant in Brooklyn—because of alleged harassment of a worker—in the early morning hours of Thursday, October 25th. Union leaders were appalled by the walkout—a strike was the last thing they wanted—and ordered the workers to report back to the plant, but by that time the *News's* management had brought in replacement workers. The unions appeared to have been outmaneuvered. "I knew right away that this was the biggest thing since PATCO," Rivera says, referring to the 1981 strike by air-traffic controllers, which was broken by the federal government. "I felt that those of us in

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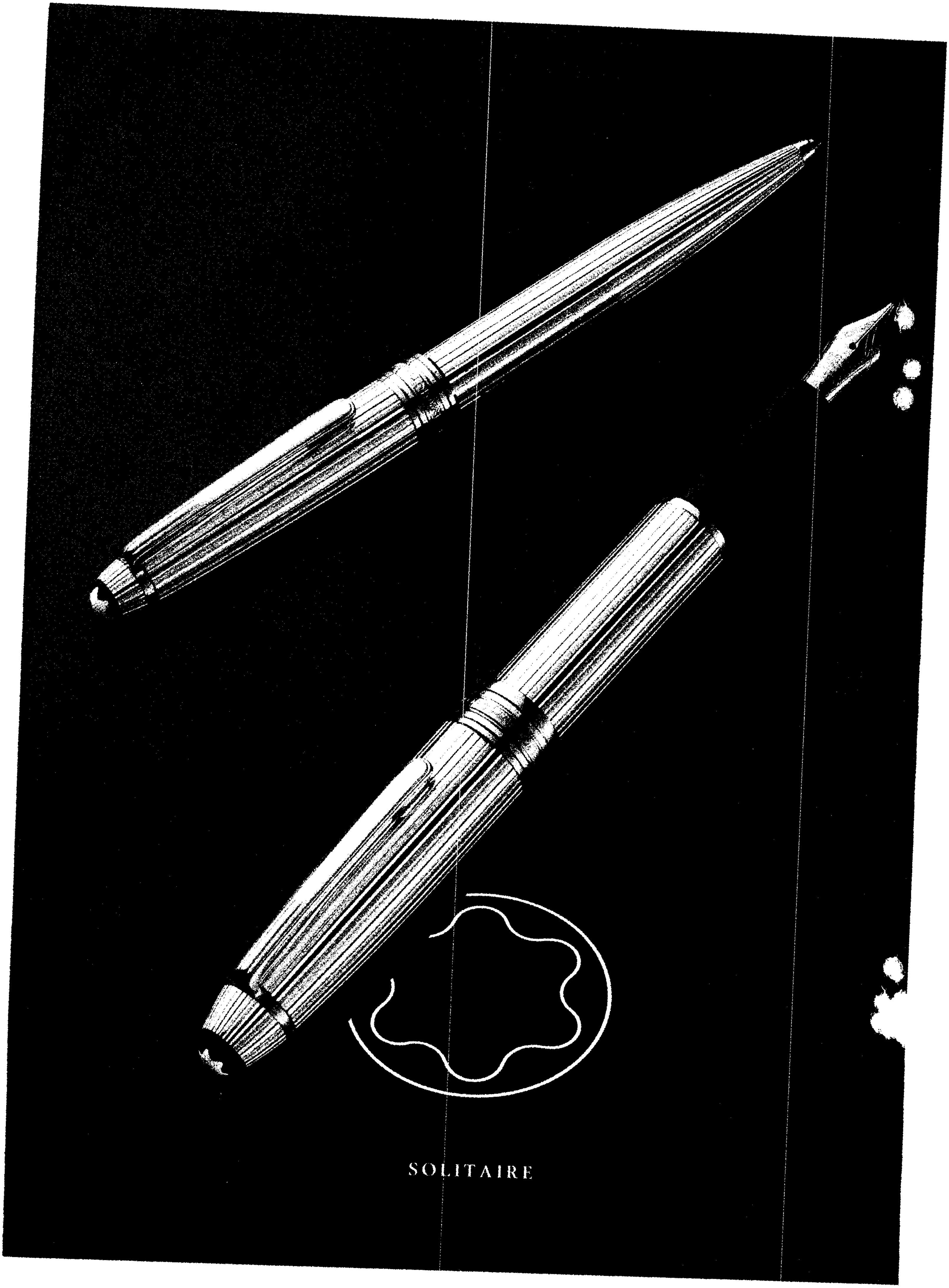
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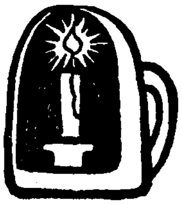
1199 had to throw ourselves into it—we couldn't afford to let this thing go down the tubes. I received a phone call from Juan Gonzalez, a columnist at the *News*, inviting me to a meeting of the Strike Support Committee at Ted Kheel's office. At the meeting, I started asking questions, making suggestions, and pretty soon we had a plan for drawing in other labor groups, both here and across the country. I keep telling people, 'This strike has national significance for unionism in this country.' "



"Once the strike began, and it became national in scope, we had to reach out for help, and that had to be done from scratch," Kheel says. "There was no organization in place. People had to be brought in, assignments had to be made, divisions of work had to be decided upon. Pulling a diverse group like that together in a short time under great pressure is a very difficult thing to do, and Dennis took a very active part in it. What Dennis is doing is making use of the same facilities as the big-business operations of today—the computer, and things like that." Among Rivera's techniques are extensive polling of members and of the public and, more recently, sophisticated financial analysis of management's bottom line. "He brings a portable telephone to meetings and sets it down beside him," Kheel says. "He takes phone calls and he makes phone calls. You can get him anywhere, any time. He's extremely well organized. He has good ideas, he helps organize the group, and then he helps follow through. He came up with our slogan—'Settle or sell.' "

"As I see it, four things can happen," Rivera says. "The union could collapse, management could give in to unions, the two sides can settle on an agreement, or the Tribune Company can sell the paper. Well, the union's not going to collapse, my friend, and neither is management. This leaves just the two other options."

What about the widely held view that the Tribune Company is in a no-lose situation—that it benefits by either breaking the union or by closing the paper? (Because of the strike situation, some argue, management might not have to give severance pay if the paper closes.)

"That is such a piece of bullshit," Rivera says. "There's not a huge tax writeoff, and if somebody is willing to buy the paper the Tribune Company has to sell. Unfortunately, labor unions have been so inept that they swallow this Tribune win-win line, which is nothing more than a bargaining strategy. The Tribune people have been masterly. They have executed an incredibly effective P.R. campaign. They discovered that they were able to destroy unions in Newport News and Chicago, and they decided to do it here. It's a classic management approach to trying to get higher profits. They brought in people from the South. They were pushing reporters in an aggressive way—making them show I.D.s inside the building, have their bags inspected. This is the game book for converting from unions to a union-free environment. They hired King & Ballow, the union-busting law firm from Nashville. The unions had a strategy, and that strategy was not to strike, but the strike was inevitable, because the whole Tribune plan hinged on provoking an incident.

"But the Tribune people completely miscalculated. They forgot about newsstands, which account for about eighty per cent of their sales. The newsstand venders won't carry the paper. The Tribune Company says it's because of union violence, and there has been some, but only a few widely reported instances." Clearly, intimidation has played a role in many news venders' decision not to sell the paper. (As of November 27th, seventy-five strikers had been arrested in strike-related incidents; police officials say these were acts of individuals and not part of a coördinated effort.) Another factor is the symbiotic business relationship between drivers and newsstand operators, who, off the books, often split the profits on "unaccountable" bundles of papers and magazines. Rivera is sympathetic to the venders' dilemma. "Those people have been getting a terrible deal," he says. "I'm trying to organize a setup that will help them. We're thinking about asking those who patronize stands that don't sell the *News* to throw in nickels and dimes to help the venders. And we, the unions, could cover whatever losses the venders are suffering.

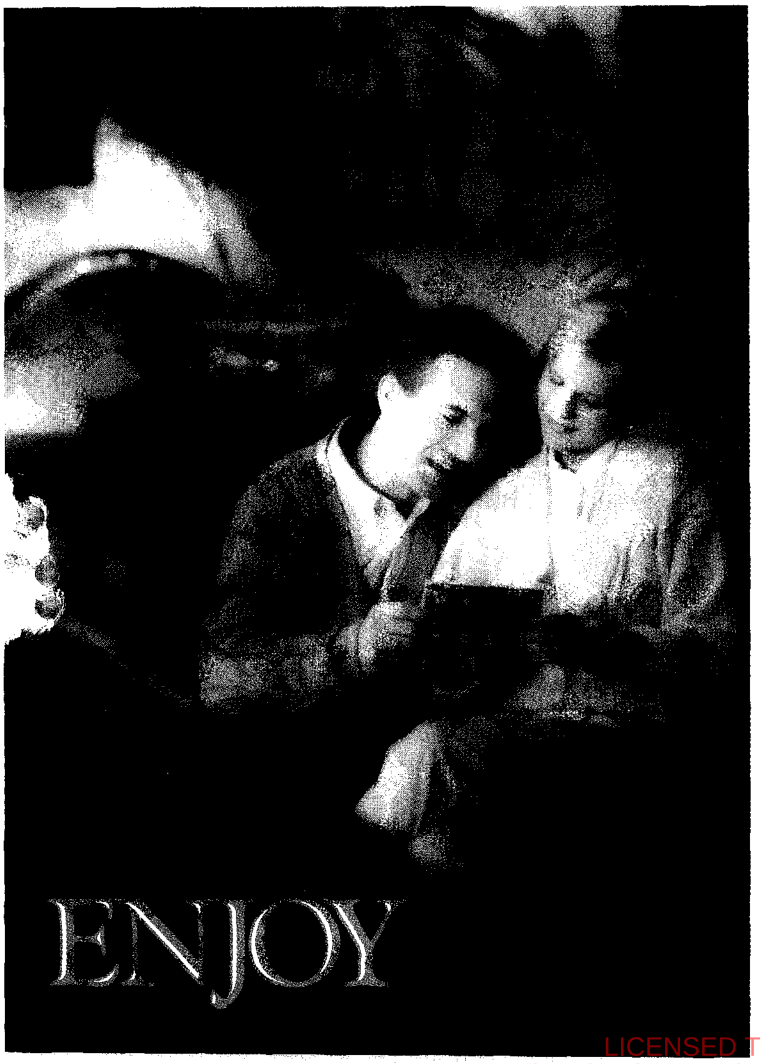
"We've got things going locally and nationally. Locally, we have a phone bank calling up all the advertisers in the *News* and urging them not to advertise. We're also attempting to play New York against Chicago, that these workers are New Yorkers against owners who are out-of-towners. I've been trying to hire a Wall Street firm to make an estimate of the Tribune's assets and determine how much it's losing in the strike. There are figures floating around—three to six million dollars a week—but we really don't know. I'm trying to devise a corporate campaign strategy, to get a lawsuit by Tribune shareholders. We have to move the fight away from New York and into the Tribune's other market areas. We have to get the national A.F.L.-C.I.O. moving—to stop being defeatist, and start boycotting all the Tribune markets.

"The question is, how long can the Tribune keep this up? One of the things we've learned from polling is that only about fourteen per cent of former *News* readers are switching to other papers; most are simply getting their news from television and radio. New Yorkers want this paper, but the reality is that the longer the strike continues the more readers the paper will lose permanently. The Tribune Company has to make a decision soon."

MANY people, both in and out of politics, have been impressed by Rivera's charm and political sagacity, and speculate that someday he may give up active involvement in unionism to seek a career in public office as standard-bearer for the fast-growing Hispanic constituency. For instance, Seymour Milstein, the chairman of Presbyterian Hospital, says, "Dennis is No. 1 in my book. He is a coming leader. Potentially, he is certainly a mayor if he has the interest."

Rivera emphatically disclaims any ambition to seek political office, let alone run for mayor. "I see my position as more influential than being a member of Congress or the legislature," he says. "To resign and run for office has no appeal for me." Nor does he want to be a power broker in the conventional sense. Nevertheless, his pivotal role in the Dinkins campaign prompted the Mayor-Elect to assign him heavy responsibilities as a mainstay of the five-member strategy committee that supervised planning and personnel canvassing before Dinkins took office.

Some of those involved in New York politics believe that Rivera's design for achieving his larger goals, such as universal health care, is naïve, and perhaps misguided. Speaker Miller, of the State Assembly, is one of them. "He is a player, as he proved in the Dinkins campaign, and he can't get out of that if he wants to be important," Miller says. He sees Rivera as a textbook labor leader of the old school—a throwback to the volcanic period of the nineteen-sixties, or even the nineteen-thirties. "He is the kind of union leader you don't see anymore—very intense and forceful, despite his quiet exterior. That is refreshing, and he certainly has the qualities and the drive to go far, but how much room for him is there in a modern labor movement that has moved way to the right? Where does he perceive himself? Can he moderate his approach so as to reach beyond the leadership of a minority union, where he is now? His alliance with Jesse Jackson may play well in New York, but how far will it get him nationally? Is he going to move from his very leftist, ideological position? He is smart



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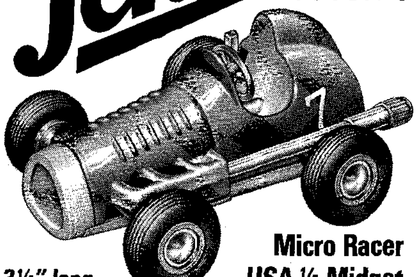
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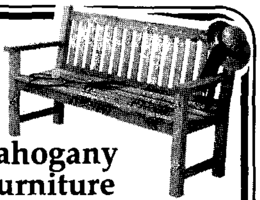
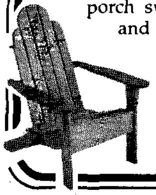
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to recognize that he and hospital management have to be allies in their approach to the state, but beyond that he is very ideological, not modern."

On a rainy Saturday afternoon in Manhattan a few days ago, Rivera smiled when he was asked about the charge that he's too old-fashioned and too leftist for the modern labor movement. Then he became serious. "I believe there's a general populist movement out there," he said. "It's the one that Kevin Phillips talks about in 'The Politics of Rich and Poor.' In every period following a massive accumulation of wealth, there's a reaction to its excesses, and I think that at this moment we are entering a new stage, in which labor can fight back, and stop the decline and erosion that have been taking place. We're in a very fluid period of history right now—look at the changes in Bush's approval rating over the past few months, for instance. And —with the economy, and everything—really, anything can happen. It's frightening, but it's also an opportunity. The Depression, after all, was the defining moment in labor history.

"Things are terrible in the cities—particularly in New York City. In 1981, at the beginning of the Reagan years, twenty per cent of the city's income came from the federal government, but today less than ten per cent does. There has been not only a transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich but an enormous transfer of responsibility from the federal government to the states and cities. The problem of New York City is a federal government that spends too much of its budget on the military. The resulting lack of money in the cities has affected all sorts of problems—education, public services, dealing with the drug epidemic.

"I can't say that Mayor Dinkins is handling things very well. He certainly hasn't handled the negotiations with the city's municipal unions very effectively. First, he settled with the teachers in October, granting them five-and-a-half-per-cent pay raises and creating great expectations for other unions, and he announced a costly program for dealing with crime in the streets—and in that same week he announced fifteen thousand layoffs. That was not a well-choreographed work of administration. I think the charges that Dinkins is too soft on labor are a joke. Except for the teachers' contract, he's basically following the same policies as Ed Koch.

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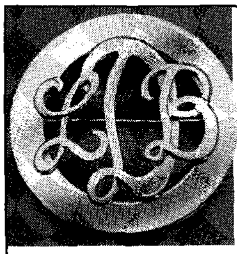
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"I see unions becoming more of a social institution now. Because the city has fewer resources, there will have to be more volunteerism—that's Reagan's term, remember? I think the unions have to start helping people find homes, help them fight against drugs in their neighborhoods, help parents become better parents, set up child-care facilities. Right now, 1199 is putting together a program for the City of New York that will keep schools open after classes, for child-care programs. If people begin to realize that unions can help meet their basic needs—not just on the job site but in the neighborhood and in the community—then, believe me, in the vacuum created by the absence of government action the power of the unions will grow.

"But none of this can happen unless there's leadership. The leadership of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., well . . ." Rivera's voice trailed off. A moment later, he continued, "Once you've become a leader in the A.F.L.-C.I.O., then you've become a member of a club, and it's not accepted that you'll be critical of other members. So the question is, how can you more effectively influence those leaders—by being critical of them or by being friendly? The Cardinal once told me that you have to respect the dignity of each individual human being even though you may disagree with him. I tell people I respect them, but I also tell them, in the strongest terms, that I disagree with them. I'm careful not to put them down or humiliate them, but I do let them know that we disagree. I try to let them know that we're disagreeing for a larger good. Unfortunately, some folks see things in a very parochial way. They're concerned about keeping control.

"Since the *News* strike started, I've been so nervous—very nervous, and obsessed. I *know* that we can win. I *know* that there's public sympathy for the strike. This is such a big thing that's riding here. And it's difficult. It's far more difficult than our struggle with the League of Voluntary Hospitals, because there I was the point man and here we have to work through ten different unions and the leaders of national, city, and state A.F.L.-C.I.O.s. The trick in dealing with those people, I guess, is to do it the same way you deal with your own members—to seek consensus and lead by example. I propose ideas, and once I propose an idea I go out and execute it, and I tell them, 'You can do that, too.' " —A. H. RASKIN

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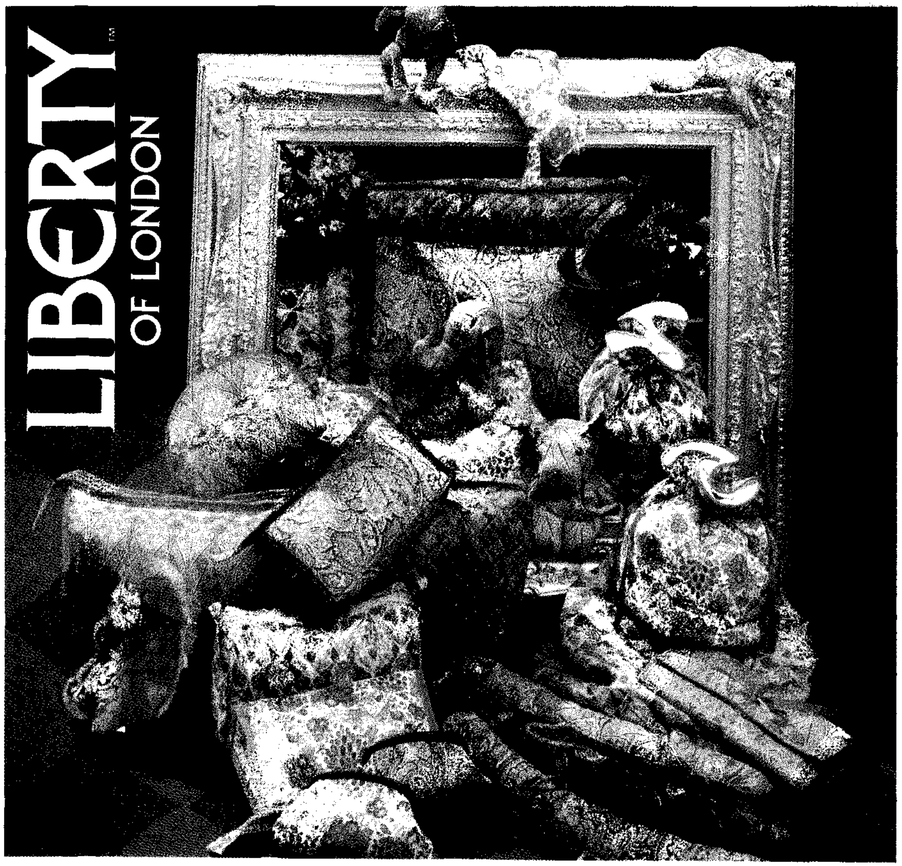

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

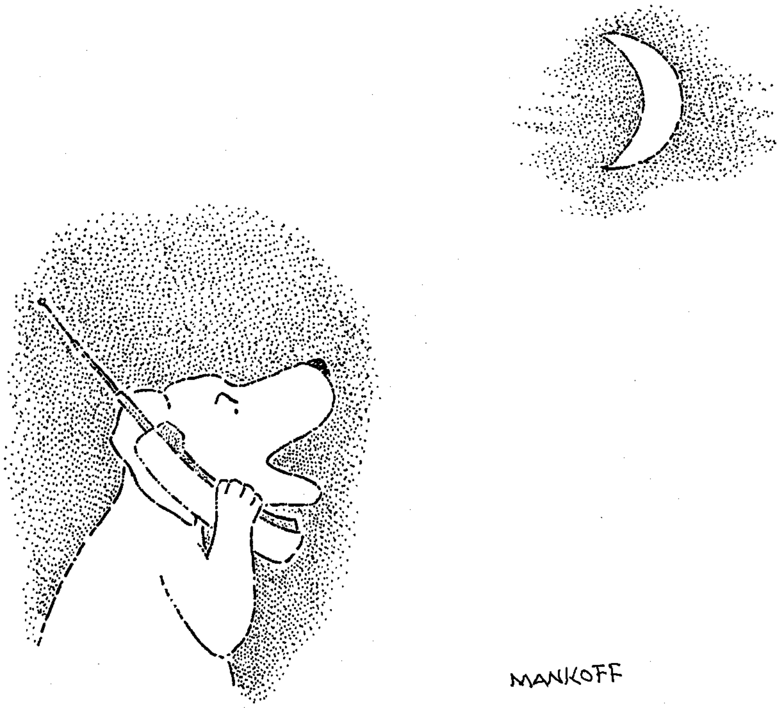
SHOCK

JUST a few years ago, when Lech Walesa and Adam Michnik discussed the damage wrought by four decades of Polish Communism they used to summon up the same image. (Back then, in the days of their mutual high regard, each credited the other with having invented it.) They'd speak of the way that Communism had taken the aquarium of prewar Polish economic life and turned it into fish soup, and of how very difficult it was going to be to take that fish soup and turn it back into an aquarium. It's still a nice image, and it still conveys the difficult task ahead as Poland tries to make its way back toward a free market. But it struck me during my stay in Poland this past October that that image even more successfully captured the essence of the country's one-year experience of democracy: how in the year since Walesa installed his longtime adviser Tadeusz Mazowiecki, his personal choice, to serve as Prime Minister at the head of a Solidarity-dominated government, the aquarium of Polish political life—all those glorious, magnificent creatures floating about in perfect moral clarity—had itself veritably been put through a Cuisinart, leaving everything all turbid with confusion, blood and entrails floating in the cloudy water. Solidarity itself had come violently apart, with one faction, Centrum, campaigning for Walesa's elevation to the Presidency of the country, and another, known by its Polish acronym of ROAD, campaigning to block that ascension by electing Mazowiecki instead. Longtime friendships, too, had sundered—perhaps most notably that between Michnik and Walesa, the godfather of his only child. Nothing in Polish political life is very clear these days, and there is precious little that is magnificent.

All of which I found surprising, since at first blush, anyway, so much of Poland's material situation seemed to have improved so dramatically since my last visit, a year ago. Back then, the country was facing the prospect of imminent hyperinflation; the monthly inflation rates in the fall of 1989 were cresting at more than fifty per cent, and some predictions for the coming year's annual rate were putting it at several *thousand* per cent. This state of affairs was destroying life savings and rendering people almost mad with anxiety, but now it was over—at least for the time being. The shock stabilization promulgated last January by Mazowiecki's Finance Minister, Leszek Balcerowicz, and his confederates had worked: the monthly inflation rate for August was 1.8 per cent and for September—despite the hit the economy took because of the Persian Gulf crisis—only 4.8 per cent.

The currency itself—the humble, once laughable zloty—has in the meantime almost miraculously filled itself up with value. Gone, for example, are the peculiar deformations that used to occur because the official rate of exchange between zlotys and dollars—the rate required for certain sorts of transactions, such as hotel rooms and standard industrial imports and exports—was pegged at some arbitrary figure a third, a fourth, a fifth, even less, of the real rate, which is to say, the one you found actually prevailing on the street. The result was that Poles, unable to buy, say, lumber, spare parts, sometimes meat with zlotys, came to despise their own currency; people prostituted themselves in all sorts of ways in order to obtain dollars or marks, or even rubles. Westerners, for their part, were continually finding themselves involved in squalid transactions typical of excursions into the Third World—enjoying a fine multicourse meal, for instance, that would have cost upward of ten dollars at the official rate (and at that a steal) and paying less for it than for a Big Mac back home. While the zloty has not quite attained complete convertibility on the international market, the rate of exchange within Poland has been both standardized and stabilized. The new government, abandoning the fiction of an official rate, has pegged all transactions to the rate prevailing on the street, not just matching that rate but even exceeding it a bit, to dampen market volatility. For months now, the rate has hovered equably around ninety-five hundred zlotys to the dollar, whether you're settling a hotel bill, exporting a shipful of pickled mushrooms, or haggling with a street vendor. The money changers have abandoned their posts in alcoves alongside the luxury hotels, and taxi-drivers are no longer avid for dollars. At present, indeed, they *prefer* to get paid in zlotys. After all, what with the Gulf crisis and the dollar plummeting across international markets, who wants dollars?

The most cursory tour of Warsaw provides another unbelievable transformation: stores positively brimming with produce, with milk, with bread, with meat. Plenitude. Clothing piled in store windows. The miserable lines that were once common in front of ratty storefronts are gone, as are the ratty



storefronts themselves. Store managers try to make their wares look appealing, in part to compete with the hundreds of free-lance stalls and tables lining the avenues. Bustling outdoor markets have spread across stadiums and empty lots and commandeered parking lots all over town. One such market springs up daily in the parking lot at the Palace of Culture, Stalin's perverse architectural blessing upon Warsaw, which was for so long the looming symbol of the Communists' hated dominion over the city. Recently, workers were busy affixing to the Palace's façade a gaudy green-and-red neon come-on for the building's newest tenant, the Queen's Casino—one of several such gambling establishments now operating in the city. Meanwhile, out in the parking lot, venders were displaying their wares—boots, shirts, jeans, radios, CD players, sparkplugs, radiators, radishes, turnips, towels, sheepskins, computers, slabs of meat, piles of books, pats of butter. The venders hailed from all over Poland and also from Turkey and Yugoslavia and Romania and Byelorussia; some worked off blankets, others out of the backs of trucks, and still others out of semi-permanent sheds leased by the city, the most gussied up of these (painted a glossy red and black) being the Sex Shoppe. In other words, a normal market.

Yet this normal market existed in the midst of a horrible recession. For it is also true that over the past year people's salaries have been slashed relative to prices. After all, that was the whole idea. On January 1st, the day of the shock treatment's principal shock, salaries were allowed one last lurch and then were pretty much frozen, while at the same time the majority of governmental price supports and subsidies were slashed or dispensed with altogether. Not surprisingly, prices skyrocketed. Workers with average monthly salaries frozen in the range of eight hundred thousand to a million zlotys—about a hundred dollars a month at the current rate—were suddenly being required to pay prices not much lower than those prevailing throughout Western Europe: the nightmare of, as the phrase went, "First World prices at Third World wages." It's not exactly the case that the store shelves are crammed with food because no one can afford to buy anything. That was the case initially, and no one *was* buying anything, but

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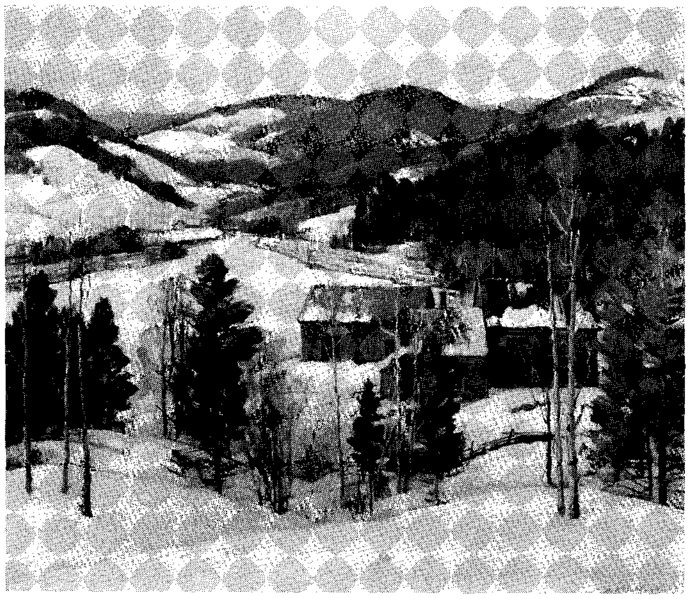

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then shopkeepers brought their prices down, pushing the squeeze a bit further back up the chain—onto farmers, for example, who then got less money for their produce while still having to pay more for fertilizers and equipment—so that now most people can just barely afford to buy some items while dispensing, of course, with all nonessentials. Consumer demand across a wide swath of commodities has taken a precipitous dive.

ONE evening, I spoke with Ryszard Bugaj, an economist who is a leading critic of the government's crash program from within Solidarity's own parliamentary caucus. I reminded him that a year ago he had predicted to me that the program not only would fail to fend off hyperinflation but might well provoke a public insurrection.

"I'm revising my opinion on only one point," he replied. "I thought the *patience of society would not be as* strong as it's proved to be up to this point. As far as the economic conditions are concerned, I think my predictions were valid. Let's start with inflation: I think it's a risky statement to claim that we're over extreme inflation. We'll be able to say that only after we've figured out some way to emerge from this recession without provoking a terrible new round of price increases —and that is by no means an obvious proposition. True, in recent months rates have been down, but inflation between December of 1989 and December of 1990 will prove to have been two hundred per cent, whereas Balcerowicz and his team had predicted only a hundred per cent. The decrease in industrial productivity was predicted to be five per cent for the year, but in fact we know that it will be close to twenty-five per cent. The Balcerowicz team predicted that our national income would decrease by a bit over three per cent, but in fact it will fall by something like twenty per cent. Unemployment was supposed to reach four hundred thousand, but now the prediction is for a million three hundred thousand by the end of the year. Consumption was to decrease one per cent, but in all likelihood it's going to have decreased twenty per cent.

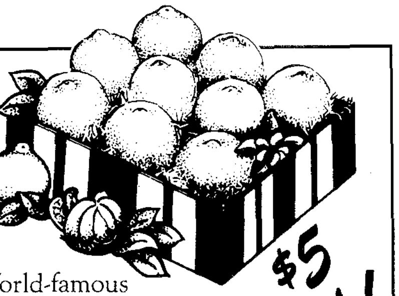
"Essential structural changes were to have taken place. Several of the industrial behemoths were supposed to have gone bankrupt under the pressure, freeing their employees for more productive employment—in light industry, for example, or the service sector. Instead, most of the behemoths have managed to survive. As monopolies, they simply slashed production and raised prices, they cannibalized themselves and borrowed from one another, and since their wages are being held steady—which is to say, kept extremely low—they haven't had to fire anyone. They'll limp along for a while, but in the meantime light industry has been all but destroyed. Go look at Lodz. Lodz has long been the textile capital of Poland, and perhaps of all Eastern Europe. "With the instigation of the price shock, demand fell drastically and the place was devastated. Sure, people will have to buy clothes again eventually, but by then it will be too late for Lodz. Many of the mills and factories will have closed down. Where are workers from the behemoths going to find employment once their places fi*nally do start closing themselves down?* There has been no industrial policy, no bridging policy, no active intervention by the government to protect certain types of industry in the context of some long-term plan. In part, this has been because of adherence to some sort of vague laissez-faire doctrine, but mainly it's because the government apparatus was not prepared to take such action. It was overwhelmed by the sheer rate of change. Everything happened too fast. And it didn't have to happen so fast."

I heard variations on several of Bugaj's points in other conversations—most often, on his frustration at the lack of anticipation of or preparation for some of the shock plan's more perverse side effects. Yes, I was told, much of the trading sector was quite vigorous: free to set their own prices, their own hours, their own goals, people were engaging in all sorts of novel commerce. But the service sector, by contrast, was quiescent, perhaps actually in decline. And services, which have long been notoriously underdeveloped in industrially top-heavy Poland, were supposed to have been one of those areas in which a boom would take up slack elsewhere. Instead, laundry services, for example, have been closing down—in part because of a drop in demand (people can no longer afford the service), and in part because of a horrendous surge in rents (municipalities, themselves facing huge cutbacks in subsidies from the central government, have been compensating by raising rents on all the commercial space they control, so established laundry services lose their leases, and new services can't gain a foothold).

And then there's the matter of credit. A key part of the stabilization plan was a radical cut in the money supply; phrased differently, a key element in Poland's close approach to hyperinflation had been the previous government's propensity for buying off its workers through frequent wage increases, which were easily backed up by the printing of more and more money—money that became less and less valuable, in an increasingly vertiginous inflationary spiral. Balcerowicz and his team brought that process to an abrupt halt—Bugaj and others say too abrupt a halt—wringing out the economy, as the phrase goes. Thus, money suddenly became both scarce and extremely expensive. In Poland early this year, interest rates on loans were pushing forty and fifty per cent *a month*. They're lower now (around fifty per cent a year), but small-scale entrepreneurs—such as any who might want to borrow, say, enough to buy two or three washing machines and a dryer—can't possibly afford bank loans. Nor would the antiquated central banking system be prepared to deal with them if they could.

"I don't want to say I don't see any positive phenomena," Bugaj told me. "We do have a balanced market. The lines are gone, and you're no longer having to engage in bribery to procure the simplest necessities. There are things in the store windows. The enterprises can track down raw materials. But let's admit that the price we're paying is tremendous—for many people, excruciating. The program did not have to be so extreme, and the result is still far from clear."

THE next day, I was talking with Jeffrey Sachs, a young Harvard professor and consultant, who had been an early advocate of the shock-therapy program and has remained a close adviser to the government. We met for breakfast at the gleaming new Marriott Hotel, where he often stays during his frequent visits to Warsaw. Sachs described himself as "extremely pleased" with how things were going. "They've taken very big steps—taken them boldly—and it's paying off," he said. "There are still things to be done—notably the move toward privatiza-



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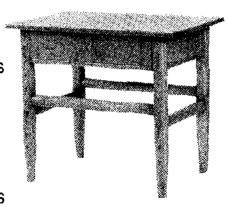

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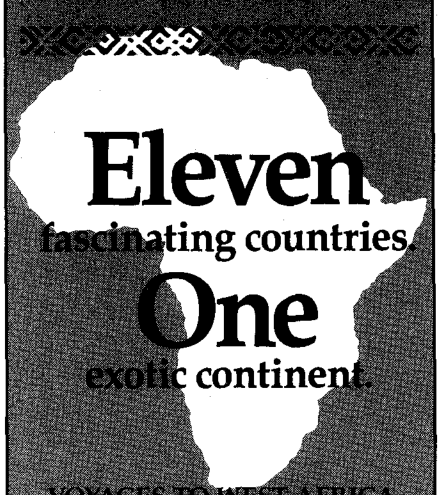

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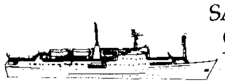

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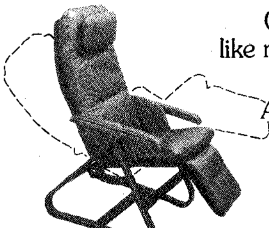

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tion. But they've done brilliantly across broad areas, and when you compare things with where they might be if they had done nothing—and I insist that that's the only valid comparison—they've done spectacularly. Perhaps their biggest achievement is that they've avoided an Argentine-style catastrophe, which seemed a real possibility at this time last year. They've licked inflation, stores are full, markets are *flourishing*, private-sector profitability is up, and—what is most encouraging—exports are way up. The shock really shook up producers; it energized them, forced them to become more efficient, to seek wider markets, and they have found them, for all sorts of items, from steel to vacuum cleaners to jam preserves. The country is sitting on a trade surplus of between three and four billion dollars. That's incredible."

Bugaj had cited that surplus as problematic, pointing out that one way of looking at it is that Poles are being forced to bleed themselves dry by importing less and exporting more—in effect, exploiting themselves in order to build up a surplus, to which international banks are only going to lay claim as repayment for the country's mammoth debt.

Sachs, disagreed with that characterization, maintaining that the surplus was the result of an authentic entrepreneurial surge. "The World Bank just did a survey of ten individual plants in a variety of industries, and in each case it was able to document remarkable internal transformations," he said. "That's even before privatization: that's simply in the face of the *prospect* of privatization. Poland's exports boomed in real terms, not just compared with imports—a forty-per-cent increase! And that's without telephones, without banking—before all those infrastructure changes begin to kick in. That's phenomenal. And, no, the surplus won't go to the banks. The Western lenders—both banks and countries—should be ashamed of themselves for how little help they've extended to Poland up to this point. The Poles will be able to tell them, 'We haven't gone through all this agony for the sake of the banks. If East Germany, with its population of seventeen million, is getting over sixty billion dollars pumped *in* this year, how can we, with our population of thirty-eight million, be expected to start paying out?' In the

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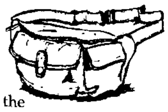

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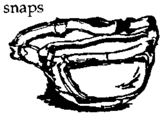

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end, the creditors will lie low; nobody seriously expects Poland to start paying any time soon. In any case, as of January Poland will be needing much of that surplus to cushion the impact of the fact that all trade with the Soviet Union, including oil and natural gas, will suddenly be going to a hard-currency basis. That, compounded by the shock of the oil-price increases due to the Gulf crisis, will constitute another hard blow. But the point is that they've built up that cushion. It gives them some flexibility, and it's going to make a huge difference."

Sachs went on to say, "Thanks to wage restraint, only twenty of the four hundred and ninety biggest state enterprises are currently reporting that they're operating at a loss. Compare that with East Germany, where they took a different tack, increasing everybody's wages overnight to about half the typical West German wage. The trouble is that an East German worker is not half as productive as a West German worker, so overnight the East German factories became ludicrously unprofitable. I doubt whether twenty out of *their* top four hundred and ninety factories are operating at a profit. They ended up with workplaces closing by the hundred: thirty-per-cent unemployment. And Poland has avoided that. People complain about unemployment here, but it's still under five per cent—which is to say, under the rate in the United States or virtually any country in the European Community." (More recent figures, however, suggest that unemployment is now beginning to rise sharply.)

"I can't take that complaint seriously," Sachs continued. "In fact, the Polish government regularly gets attacked for just the *opposite* fault—for not forcing *more* unemployment, a greater austerity. Actually, I think its approach is exactly right. Especially in a country where you don't yet have the banking infrastructure that would allow widespread small-scale entrepreneurial loans and a resultant expansion, you don't want to force people out on the street, and, thanks to the wage restraint, you don't have to. Yes, average salaries are low, but if you increased them sharply you'd dramatically increase unemployment. People should be being *drawn* out of the antiquated dinosaur establishments, not forced out."

Sachs acknowledged that Poland was in the grip of a recession, though he suggested that in large part this was because of various regionwide phenomena (the collapse of the Soviet market, for example), rather than the shock treatment per se; and in any case he contended that its impact was decidedly less severe than some people had been maintaining. "All sorts of figures are routinely being bandied about, but in many cases they're the result of statistical mirages," he said. "Take that figure to the effect that living standards have declined thirty per cent. That is simply false, tragically false, a complete statistical fluke. That's the kind of figure you'd see in starkest wartime, and it's just not happening. It simply fails to compare like with like, because it restricts itself to the prices for goods being sold in state stores, whereas the whole point is that before 1990 those goods were largely unavailable in those stores. Either you had to pay bribes to the store manager or you had to pay black-market prices outside the store or you had to stand in one line after

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another for hours to procure the little bit that was there inside the store, and in that case you're putting no value whatsoever on your own time. If we adjust for all those factors—what people were *actually* paying before the transition compared with now—the difference is not that great. I'd acknowledge perhaps a ten-per-cent drop for some people. Many, however, are doing much, much better."

This line of argument is indeed compelling, but it fails to acknowledge the fact that millions of people *were* standing in those lines for hours, and even though the lines were ghastly, at the end of them people were taking home food at subsidized prices—prices that are no longer available.

"The real problem in Poland today," Sachs insisted, "is not so much the actual present situation as people's fears about the future. Polls show that almost one out of every two industrial workers is expecting to be fired momentarily. That's simply not going to happen—half of Poland's industrial workers will not be forced to leave their jobs. But the conviction that they will be seems to be shaping a great deal of the public mood, whether it has to do with the prospect of privatization or with the coming elections. And that's tragic, because Poland really has come so far—not only compared with where it might have been but also in comparison with the other countries in the region. They're all in bad shape, but Poland has made incredible advances, especially in its ability to face the future. A year ago, Poland was being lumped together with Bulgaria and Romania as one of the basket cases. Now it seems to me that it will do well in comparison even with Hungary and Czechoslovakia, because it has already made many of the hard choices. Hungary, for example, still has price controls and a nonconvertible currency. And the Czechoslovak economy is still tremendously centralized, whereas Poland, under the pressure of Solidarity, has already been decentralizing for over a decade. Frankly, I don't envy the Czechs. We're talking about two separate shocks: the shock of the transition to a free market, and the shock of the horrendous overnight conversion of all transactions with the Soviet Union to hard currency. Poland, through its incredible efforts over the past year, will have managed to separate the brunt of those two shocks: it will have had a year's head start on the first before it takes the hit from the second. Czechoslovakia is going to be getting them simultaneously, on January 1, 1991. I wouldn't want to be in their shoes."

Sachs concluded, "This place so reminds me of Europe in 1947: incredible political and economic confusion just before they found their way onto the superhighway. It's just like blending into fast-moving traffic from the on-ramp. And they're so close. The great danger here now would be some sort of populist spiral—workers stampeded by inappropriate fears into desperate demands, a failure of nerve on wage restraint. Then you'd end up like Latin America: tides of inflationary expansion followed by doses of extreme austerity; periods of fierce repression, brief respites, renewed repression; completely muddled property relations. A hopeless, hopeless tailspin. It would all be so tragic."

THE Latin-American analogy plays all sorts of ways in Poland these days. Sachs himself first arrived in Poland, last year, on the strength of the "miracle" that he had wrought in helping to avert Bolivia's hyperinflation in 1986, and there was much discussion at the time about whether the two situations were in any way comparable. Poles at first bristled at such comparisons, maintaining that as Europeans they couldn't possibly have anything to do with the sorts of dilemmas confounding the primitive, culturally backward denizens of the Third World. But increasingly the analogy made its way into Polish discourse. People spoke of a narrow ridge between two abysses, characterizing them variously as "Pinochet" (the forced introduction of a free market by way of a totalitarian suspension of political freedoms) and "Perón" (the sort of populist nightmare alluded to by Sachs). And there have been other analogies as well—other lessons. Balcerowicz, for instance, has said that the thing he learned from Latin America was that one mustn't under any circumstances suspend an anti-inflationary program in midstride, no matter what the pressures. (Brazil and Argentina have repeatedly done so, and look at the mess they've got themselves into.)

The Latin-American analogue that seemed most vividly apt to me during my recent visit, however, was one suggested by, among others, Jan Jozef

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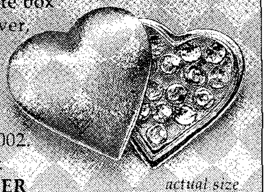
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Lipski, a senator and veteran oppositionist, who has been warning of a precipitate polarization of both wealth and opportunity in Poland—warning that the country seems to be dividing in two and, in that sense, is beginning to resemble places like Brazil. I, too, was repeatedly struck by the starkness of that growing division: There are people in Poland today who are taking off, who are launching themselves at full throttle into the twenty-first century, people who clearly are going to make it—and there are a lot of those. But there are many more who seem shell-shocked, dumbfounded, paralyzed; already, they're falling by the wayside, they seem to be slipping, almost as if back into the nineteenth century. Some Poles have started worrying that the Oder River, on the country's western border, may become a sort of European equivalent of the Rio Grande. Such an outcome does seem possible to me, though the model mustn't be oversimplified: in the same way that Brazil and Mexico and El Salvador feature a class of people who live in elegant, tree-lined neighborhoods, shop in Miami, and send their children to American universities—people who might in a sense be seen more as Americans than as Brazilians or Mexicans or Salvadorans—so Poland seems to be developing a class of international citizens who vacation in Switzerland and shop in Paris, and whose access and energy and enterprise and range of opportunity allow them to levitate above the rest of the Polish reality. A major difference in the Polish case is that in many ways it was the brute, courageous historic action of those now being left behind that allowed the breakout by the others. Their resentment, after all they suffered and all they achieved, could fuel the kind of populist rage which leads toward the Latin-American model of Peronism. The analogues are not unrelated.

One day, I was talking with a remarkably enterprising importer, a man in his early forties. "It used to be that, because of the artificial gap in exchange rates, people could go to New York, for instance, find some sort of menial job, save up a few thousand dollars, and then return home, change their earnings back into zlotys on the black market, and live like kings for several months," he remarked. "In New York, we'd tell each other, the money just seems to be lying there on the street—

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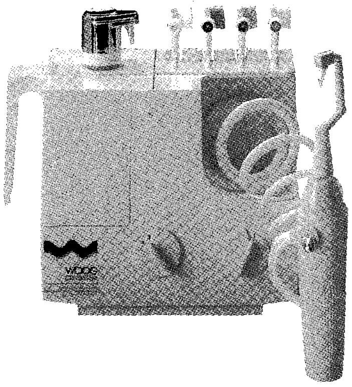

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all you have to do is pick it up and stuff it in your pockets. Well, what with the standardization of the currency, that strategy no longer works. But in the meantime the way it used to be for us in New York is how it has become here in Warsaw. Everywhere you look, money is just lying there on the street, crying to be picked up. There are tremendous opportunities for anybody who wants to make business. All you need is a brain and the spirit of initiative."

The importer told me that he had been a journalist for seventeen years, but that five years ago, with a thousand dollars he borrowed from friends, he launched himself into the business of importing computer parts. At the time, the United States and a number of countries in Western Europe had banned the export of certain high-technology items to Poland, as one of the sanctions applied following General Wojciech Jaruzelski's declaration of martial law. But Singapore and Taiwan weren't observing the embargo. The Polish government, for its part, eager to see the importation of such items by any means possible, allowed a loophole in its own laws. Official firms had to pay customs duties on such imports and, for that matter, had to buy them at official rates, but private citizens faced no such duties or restrictions, and they could bring in as many products as they wanted. "Go back and look at the history of your own country," the importer said. "All the big family fortunes—the Kennedys', whoever—started out like this: quasilegal, the result of business being done on the margin, in the gray areas. It's the same way here."

In 1985, the importer flew to Singapore—that was when it was still possible to buy such tickets for zlotys at the fictional rate, so the round trip, by way of Bangkok, cost only a hundred and fifty dollars. He acquired fifty hard-disk-drive components for about five hundred dollars, returned (encountering no problems at any of the borders), and sold them—to a firm that was assembling computers in Poland for the Russian market—at a markup of a hundred per cent. Plowing those profits back into his business, he went back to Singapore, this time acquiring twice as many hard drives. Gradually, the Warsaw-Singapore jets began filling up with other Poles doing exactly what he was doing. (Sixty-five per cent of the personal computers in Poland today

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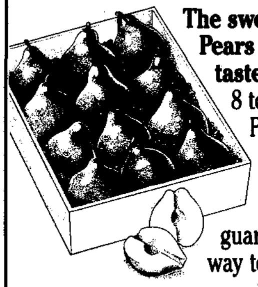

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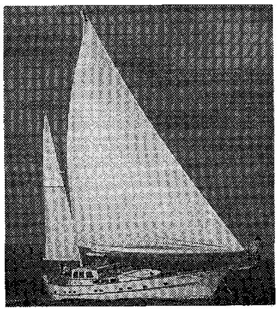

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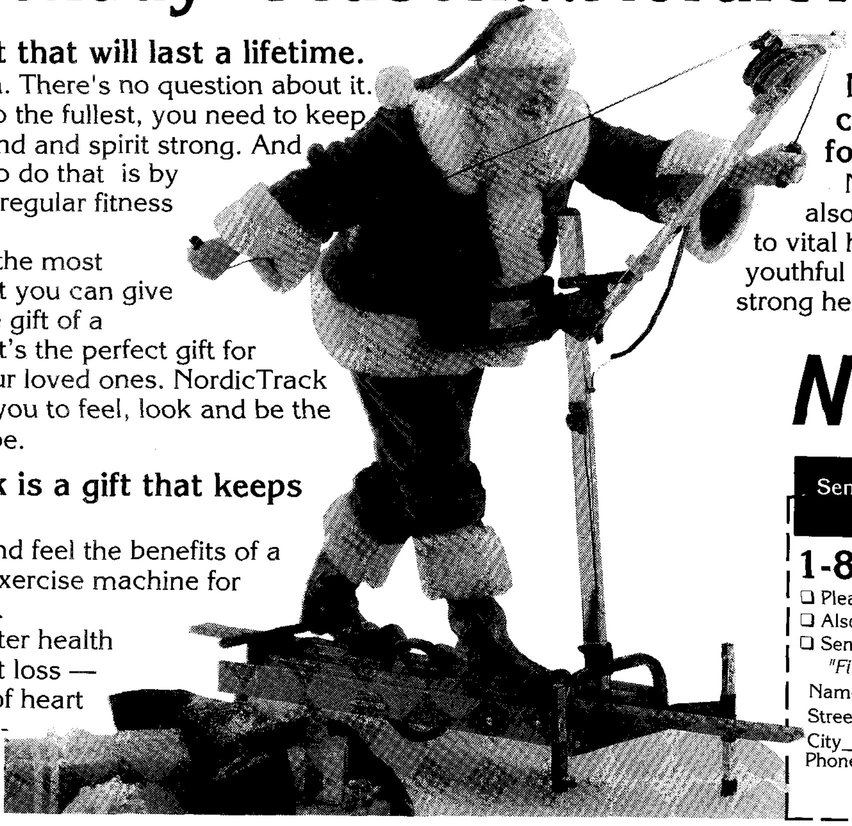
derive from such "private imports," and so do eighty per cent of the photocopiers.) As more people crowded in on the Warsaw-Singapore run and the profit margin began to fall, this man began to look into other sorts of business. During one overnight stop in Bangkok, he was wandering about and came upon the ready-to-wear-garment district. He brought home five hundred skirts and took them to a flea market at one of the outlying stadiums. (Once again, the Jaruzelski regime was only too happy to see cheap consumer items flooding the market and dampening the consumer rage that might have focussed on the inadequacies of domestic production.) All sorts of entrepreneurs soon began streaming into Bangkok from Poland; in fact, there's a hotel near the wholesale mart there which caters almost exclusively to Polish clientele. But now, what with fax machines and good contacts, this particular importer seldom even needs to go to Bangkok himself anymore. He has containers arriving by ship on a regular basis. He and his wife operate a wholesale booth on Fridays at the stadium, which accommodates the biggest wholesale mart in Eastern Europe, and there they distribute cards to traders from all over the region. The traders then place large orders, and take them back to Poznan, Bialystok, Prague, Sofia, Kiev. The world is opening wide.

BUT not for everybody. A few days later, I was in Lodz, about seventy-five miles southwest of Warsaw, talking with some of the textile workers there (most of them women), and some of their managers (all of them men), and nearly everyone was scared. No Polish city, it seems, has taken a harder series of hits over the last year than Lodz, which is Poland's second-largest city. Forty per cent of the town's work force is employed in the textile industry and ten per cent in garments, and the entire place seems to be reeling. There was, to begin with, the complete collapse in consumer demand at the outset of the year, as people just stopped buying clothes for several months. Then, once they resumed, they seemed to shift in many cases to the often higher-quality and (now) comparably priced gray-market foreign imports. Operating with substandard equipment, under atrocious conditions, and at pathetic wages, Polish textile workers usually—though not always—tended to produce goods of less than world-standard quality, but since they had operated more or less as a monopoly, quality hadn't previously mattered much. In recent years, many Lodz plants have been scrambling to improve the quality of their products—in some cases, to remarkable effect, but with no governmental protection. "I'm amazed that the government's trade policy isn't more protective of the domestic product," my importer friend had said. "I mean, in effect, two of us, my wife and I, are supplying the local market with the sort of quantities it used to take more than a hundred workers in Lodz to produce." And the workers in Lodz do seem to be fighting a losing battle.

In any event, probably nothing could have protected them from the effects of the second blow—the astonishingly sudden disintegration of their primary market, which was the Soviet Union. As the Soviet Union slides over the precipice—a startling state of affairs, which is one of the overwhelming realities of life all over Poland these days—



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Lodz is being dragged along. The Soviet Union’s central command structures for placing and paying for textile orders all seem to be coming undone, and anarchy is engulfing the market. In some cases, individual republics or towns, or even enterprises, are starting to establish commercial links of their own, but they often lack hard currency, or, if they have any, they, too, tend to prefer the Thai product.

Meanwhile, the managements of several Lodz factories, anticipating such developments and trying to upgrade their physical plants in order to compete more effectively in the Western market, fell victim to an entirely different sort of calamity. During the late eighties, some factory directors took out reasonably prudent loans within the context of carefully thought-out business plans, and then the January shock struck: the interest rates on their loans suddenly began shooting through the roof at the very moment that consumer demand for their products was temporarily disappearing. “We were between a hammer and an anvil,” the director of one Lodz plant told me. “The hammer of the government, urging us to take ever-greater free-market-style risks, and the anvil of the still existing old socialist regulations and bureaucracies and styles of thinking, none of which have changed in the slightest, especially in the state banks. They showed no mercy and no foresight, and now we’ve been liquidated before we even had a chance to move into our just completed new plant. It’s crazy.”

I spent much of my time in Lodz talking with workers at some of the other plants. The conditions under which the women worked were horrendous. I came upon a group of them taking a break in their basement canteen, and I asked them for their impressions of the current year’s changes.

“Things are much worse,” one of them said, and the rest concurred. The building was throbbing from the vibrations of the weaving machines overhead.

Did they still have to stand in lines after work to procure food for their families?

No, they said. In that respect, things were better, and that was a relief. “Now we just don’t go to the store at all,” one of them interjected, “because we can’t afford anything.”

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—Patrizia Cavalli

(*Translated, from the Italian, by Judith Baumel.*)

• •

Were they actually eating less well than last year?

“Absolutely,” they all answered. They had meat much less often, for instance. “Our wages didn’t go up, and chicken costs twice as much as it used to, beef three times, pork four times,” one explained. “The manager tells us we can’t possibly expect any raises for the rest of the year, and meanwhile the price of meat keeps going up. So we’ll be getting even less.”

Why didn’t they quit, try to find work in the private sector?

“What private sector? What work? People are being laid off all over town. They’re all looking for work, and there is no work. People keep talking about the service sector—how we all need services, and there ought to be jobs opening up in services. Yeah, we could all use services, you bet. But none of us in Lodz can afford services, so how is such a sector ever supposed to develop?”

Why didn’t they move elsewhere?

“Where? There are housing shortages everywhere. We live five, six to a two-room apartment—those of us who are lucky. It took us years of waiting on a list just to get that, and you expect us to move?”

Why didn’t they quit and start businesses of their own?

“I’d love to,” one of them said. “But to start a business takes money, not to mention space. How are you supposed to save any money earning seven hundred thousand zlotys a month?”

Not everyone in Poland has a group of friends from whom to throw together a thousand dollars in loans. The division between those who do and those who don’t may be one way of thinking about the division between those who will stand a chance of making it and those who won’t.

“IT’S ridiculous,” an economist in Warsaw commented one day. I had been telling him about my recent conversations. “Why should Lodz be collapsing while guys who bring in imports from Thailand are thriving? Thai workers don’t get paid that much less than the workers in Lodz. What’s the problem?”

Many people argue that the problem arises from the fact that the great majority of Polish industries are still state-owned. The problem with state ownership—the problem, in essence, with Communism itself—is that it fails to allow for an “ownership function.” There’s no one owning the facility and standing to make a profit if things are done well or to face a loss if things screw up. If things screw up under Communism, the bill is just passed on higher up the ministerial chain of command. Nobody suffers, there’s no discipline, and there’s no incentive. For various fluky reasons, many of the state enterprises in Poland now happen to be momentarily profitable (in some instances, for the first time ever), but that profitability is going to be short-lived, and unless dramatic changes are made in the structure of ownership in Poland the country stands to face ever greater difficulties. The Polish economy, so the argument runs, absolutely requires an ownership function. It needs to privatize.

Yet Poles are also learning that, as a familiar saying there has it, "it was a lot easier taking from one and giving to all than it's going to be taking from all and giving back to one." And "taking from all and giving back to one" doesn't begin to describe the complexity of the task at hand. To begin with, the question of just what is to be taken from whom (to say nothing of to whom it will subsequently be given) ends up in an almost insuperable muddle. Repeatedly, in Poland, one comes upon enterprises answerable to one ministry, inhabiting buildings that technically belong to a second ministry, and operating equipment that comes under the purview of a third. The flow of subsidies and profits between the enterprises and their ministries has become similarly convoluted over the years, and, in any case, the ministries have steadily had less and less to do with their enterprises. For if Poland was ever a classically Communist state—with the state standing in for "all the workers" or "all the citizens"—it certainly hasn't been one for well over a decade. As a result of repeated attempts to "reform" Communism from on high—at times under pressure from society, and occasionally as a consequence of power struggles among ruling élites—it is no longer by any means clear who, if anyone, "owns" any of the various enterprises in the sense that anyone might be able to exercise such components of ownership as the right to use a piece of property, to benefit financially from its exploitation, and to dispose of it at will. Those components have long been scattered all over the place.

Back in September of 1981, for example, three months before the imposition of martial law, Solidarity forced the regime to pass a bill providing for self-management, which tended to shift control of the various enterprises away from the central ministries and toward the enterprises themselves; in addition, independently elected workers' councils at the separate enterprises were to be given wide-ranging responsibilities for the management of their workplaces—in certain instances, including the right to appoint, supervise, and fire their managing directors. At the time, Solidarity activists favored the bill partly as an element in a short-term strategy aimed at upending the

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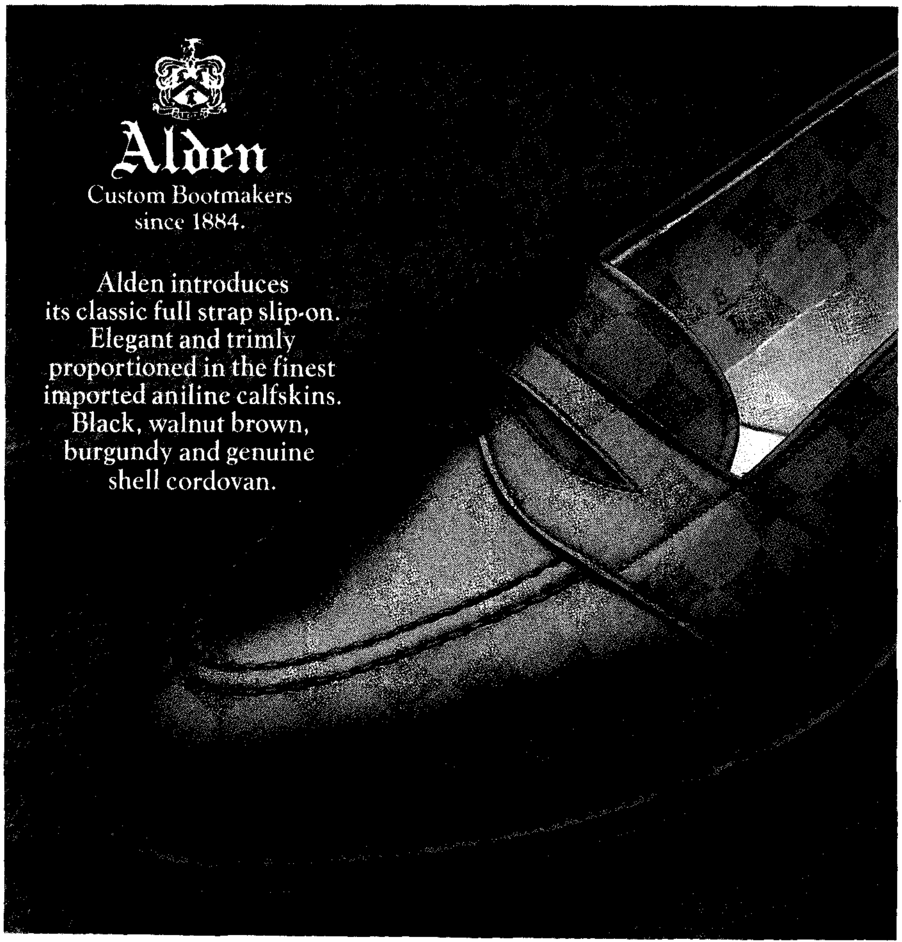

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regime's tactic of responding to Solidarity's demands by simply refusing to manage things at all. If the regime couldn't or wouldn't deliver food or coal or any of the other provisions that were suddenly becoming so unnervingly scarce, then the workers would have to do so on their own. During that period, Solidarity chapters at several of the key industrial installations around the country formed an association called Network to coördinate just such an effort.

The regime suspended that bill with its imposition of martial law, in December of 1981, but reinstituted it in a limited fashion in 1984. In the years thereafter, clandestine Solidarity chapters at several (though by no means all) of the larger enterprises started competing with the regime's own official replacement union, the O.P.Z.Z., for seats on the workers' councils. Those councils grew increasingly powerful within their factories at the same time that reformists in the regime were taking more and more authority away from the central ministries and farming it out to the individual enterprises.

Some observers have suggested that as a result property relations in Poland are now so hopelessly confused that the very notion of property will have to be reinvented. It's certainly true that when the Solidarity government began considering various privatization schemes earlier this year it met with howling protests from workers at many enterprises, who insisted that their own operations weren't the government's to dispose of in the first place—that, in fact, such enterprises were the property of the workers themselves. Wasn't that what the struggle had been about all along? (Back in 1981, Balcerowicz and other current government economists had themselves endorsed the original self-management law as part of that strategy to circumvent the delaying tactics of the Communist regime.) Hadn't workers sacrificed for generations, enduring substandard wages and appalling conditions, because they were assured that at least the plant was theirs, that the sacrifices they were making would someday redound to their benefit? Network was reborn, this time as part of a campaign against the new Solidarity government.

Many objections to the claims of the workers' right to ownership have been advanced, but two sorts in particular—those dealing with fairness and with

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efficacy—seem the most trenchant. To begin with, people ask, why should the miners at a particularly productive mine, for example, get to keep their wonderful facility when the miners at a much less productive, largely tapped-out mine down the road (miners who have worked at least as long and hard as their neighbors) get stuck with that junk pile? Is there any justice in that? For that matter, why should the workers at a foundry, say, into which the Polish government has poured hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of capital investment over the past few decades—debts still owed by the Polish people as a whole—get to claim all that equipment for themselves? What would keep them from merely selling the equipment and happily living off the proceeds for the rest of their days?

Even setting aside such questions of equity, however, there are problems regarding the efficiency of any large-scale worker-self-management scheme. The main one, opponents assert, is that workers simply cannot be expected to manage their enterprises effectively toward the realization of any long-term goals. On any given day, they will face a tremendous temptation to grant themselves a wage increase, for example, rather than embark on some expensive capital improvement or, conversely, they'll resist slashing their own salaries, or firing some of their own numbers, if market conditions require that. No, opponents insist, workers should work and managers should manage, and the workers should see to it that their own interests are protected by strong unions. Proponents of worker-ownership schemes counter that strong unions are not going to be such an easy prospect in the coming period of mass unemployment. Beyond that, they maintain that there are instances in which worker self-management has proved effective, and that in any case the workers don't necessarily have to own the whole enterprise: they ought simply to be handed a large chunk of it—possibly even be required to buy it outright but on the basis of liberal credit terms, to be met later out of the company's eventual profits—both in recompense for their years of sacrifice and as an incentive toward more productive work in the future.

When the Parliament finally did pass a privatization bill, this past June, it tried to deal with such objections by

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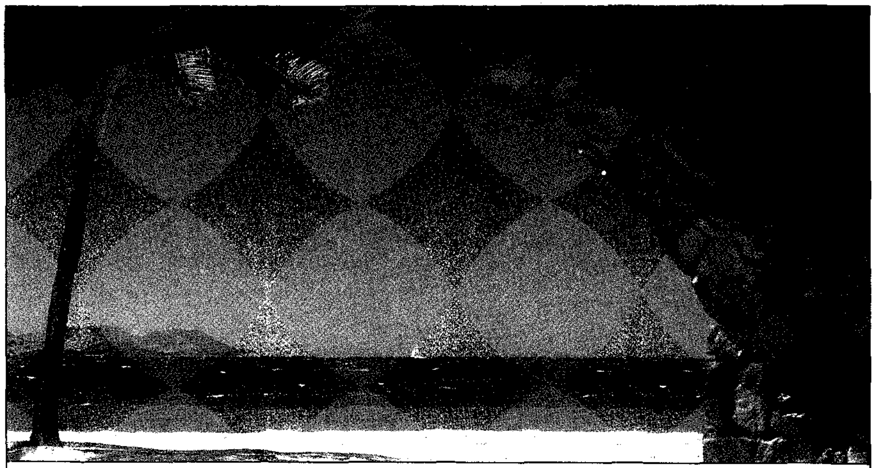

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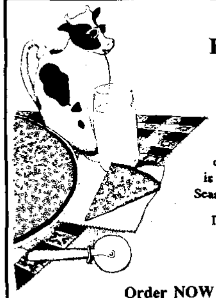

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assuring workers a stake in any eventual sale: once a price for the company to be privatized had been set, workers would be permitted to buy as much as twenty per cent of the shares at half price (under certain conditions). Any given privatization—and it looked as though privatizations were going to be handled on a case-by-case basis—would begin with the "corporatization," or "commercialization," of the enterprise in question; that is to say, the government would simply *assert* ownership of the enterprise, reconstituting it as a "one-man joint stock company," with all the stock held, for the time being, by the Finance Ministry. That's how the first part of the dilemma, the "taking from all," was to be accomplished—if, that is, the various players proved willing to go along with the scheme. Workers and managers alike tended to view the plan with alarm, suspecting, with some cause, that their own livelihoods might be at stake; and at several enterprises they launched efforts to forestall—or, better yet, upend—the entire process, at least with regard to their own workplaces. A recent poll in the weekly *Polityka* found 36.3 per cent of Poland's workers preferring state ownership for their own plants, 35.3 per cent favoring worker ownership, and only 13.2 per cent favoring privatization. Eerie alliances began to form: even in places without strong workers' councils, and where the management was still in the hands of the once hated *nomenklatura*, workers occasionally joined their former enemies in an effort to stave off the yet more dreaded spectre of privatization.

It remained to be seen how the second half of the problem could be accomplished—the "giving to one," the granting of ownership, that is, through some legitimate method that would both foster the efficient control of the enterprise and help launch a smoothly functioning market. And here the privatization bill provided only the vaguest outlines of a framework.

Some people favored taking the enterprises and selling them one by one through a straightforward series of stock offerings—a so-called British-style auction. This approach presented various difficulties. To begin with, such auctions were terribly time-consuming. Someone was rude enough to point out that Margaret Thatcher, for all her years of trying, had been able to accomplish privatizations of only thirteen state-owned companies in Britain—and this in the context of an already flourishing free-market system. One of the most time-consuming aspects, even in the best of circumstances, would be obtaining an objective valuation of the firm—a prerequisite to any bids: people obviously need some idea of the value of what they're to be bidding on. But in the Polish conte any such valuations could prove almost insuperably difficult. Past performance, in the context of a Communist comman economy that no longer exists, would have no bearing, even if proper books were being kept—and, of course, they weren't. (Why would they have been?) As for current standing, the Communist practice of "interfirm credit"—a chain of indebtedness among companies involved in a given production process—completely skewed the situation. In some cases, up to forty per cent of a firm's assets took the form of such outstanding loans, and who could know their creditworthiness without an inventory of those other companies (and, in turn, of the companies that owed those companies money—in short, of the entire system)? As for the future, who was to know what sorts of tax laws and so forth would apply? Both the workers and the managers, meanwhile, would have an interest in seeing that the firm was undervalued, so that they could acquire their own shares at a lower price—an interest that, of course, would not parallel that of the wider community, though it would parallel that of the other prospective buyers, and hence provide the basis for extensive corruption.

Even if all those factors were overcome and some sort of honest valuation achieved, there would still be the problem of who would be likely to end u buying the various enterprises. In the first instance, the most likely buyers would be already rich Poles, which is to say, in most cases, Poles who had gained their fortunes under the old regime; that is, as a result not of any special merit but, rather, of their positions in the *nomenklatura* or the black-market mafia—and that would be a politically explosive outcome. Or else the buyers would be foreigners—perhaps an even more explosive out-

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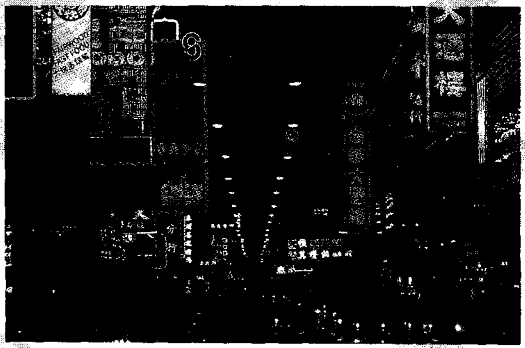

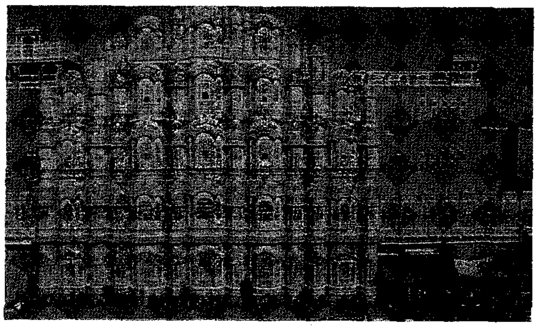

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The Hawa Mahal in Jaipur.

Six hundred years after Marco Polo's account of his travels to the kingdom of Kublai Khan fired the European imagination, Rudyard Kipling wrote that the Orient would never be civilized after the methods of the West. "There is too much Asia, and she is too old," he said. While modern history has proved Kipling right, it continues to tantalize us — its scope, its beauty, its magic and mystery lure millions Eastward every year.

Yes, there is too much Asia —but that doesn't stop the peripatetic traveller from trying. Today, the grand tour of Asia and the Pacific is far more accessible than it ever was before, within reach monetarily and geographically. Bound for the East on business or pleasure or both? Here are the highlights of a journey you'll retrace again and again, in the atlas on the coffee table or the maps of your imagination.

INDIA

India seems overwhelming to most Western visitors. Yet for the traveller who is eager to learn and approaches it with an open mind and respect for the differences of others, the experience can be a rich, exciting, and extraordinary one.

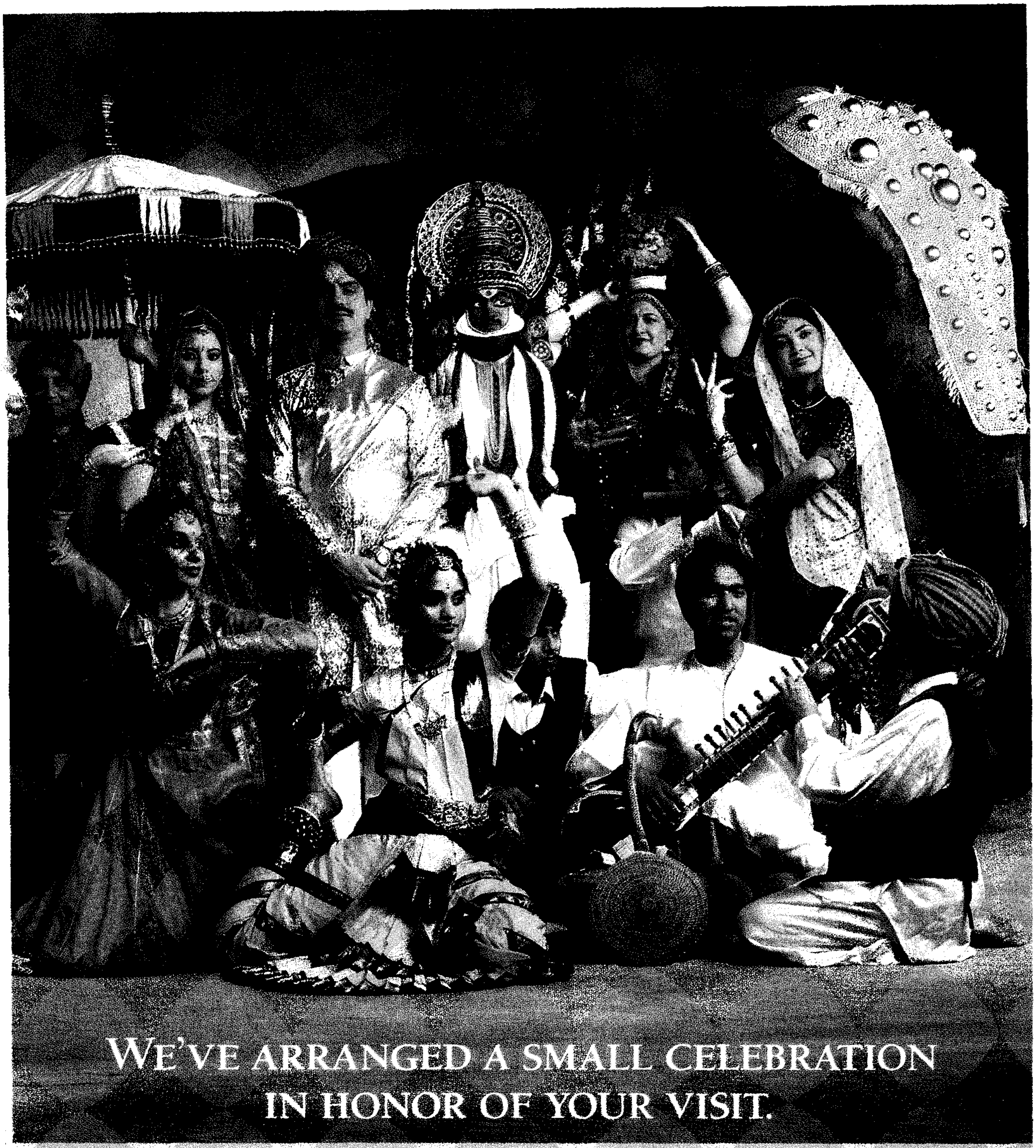
It is a country of stunning contrasts, where sacred cows wander through busy thoroughfares in big cities, astrologers are accorded the respect shown scientists, and life is ordered according to religious traditions and customs laid down hundreds of years ago. India is a feast for the soul as well as the eyes and the palate. No one can come away from the Taj Mahal and not reflect on the beauty of one man's enduring love for his wife; see thousands of pilgrims bathing in the Ganges to ensure their immortal salvation and not be moved by the power of belief; or participate in or even view the wild festival commemorating Krishna's birth and not understand the deeply sensual, joyful connection Indians feel to their faith.

Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta, and Madras are fascinating, but in the smaller towns and villages, the country's true beauty comes alive — in the exquisite palaces of Gwalior, the pink city of Jaipur, the hill section of Dharmsala, the houseboats of Srinagar, and the magnificent Himalayan vistas of Kashmir. On the Indian coast north of Puri, the Black Pagoda, famed for its erotic bas reliefs, rises above a desolate sandy plain. In Darjeeling, the Palace of Thunderbolts, at seven thousand feet, commands a stupendous view of the Himalayan peaks. And Madras, the home of Dravidian art and culture, celebrates the vitality of earlier kingdoms and ancient times.

The Taj Mahal, universal symbol of love

A Thai Buddhist templ

India is among the world's major economies, and a period of economic liberalization that was ushered in five years ago has increased foreign investment a great deal. While negotiations always tend to proceed slowly, the country's innumerable attractions and the warmth and friendliness of its inhabitants do much to make business a pleasure for Western visitors.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THAILAND

You can find the charm and romance of ancient Thailand in the Thailand of today, although they may not be immediately apparent in Bangkok. But even in the bustling metropolis you can find them in the magical early mornings when the *wats* disgorge their monks into the city and the tinkle of temple bells mixes with bird songs wafting through the air.

Culinary delights in a Bangkok market

© The Telegraph Colour Library

Even though foreign investment is at an all-time high, the Thais insist that business, like all of life, must incorporate *sanuk*—which, loosely translated, means "fun." There is always time for *sanuk* — also for beauty, art, fine cuisine, sensual pleasures, and gracious living.

There are world-class hotels in the capital and in the resort areas, and comfortable smaller hostelries outside it. Everywhere in Thailand there is glorious food, spicy and savory, and always even better when it is washed down with great local beer.

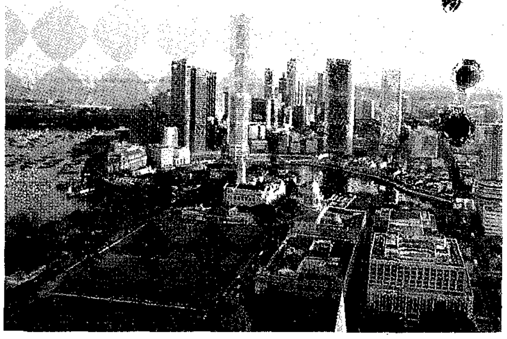
Thai handcrafts, precious gems, and silks are the bargains here, especially in the night market at Chiang Mai; and plants of many species are the specialty of the Theves Flower Market in Bangkok.

In northern Thailand, travellers are fewer and are received with great warmth and hospitality. The temples and shrines are virtually empty and the true charm and beauty of the country are omnipresent, just as they are on the southern peninsula. Throughout Thailand, the traveller who respects the customs of the country is rewarded with real hospitality and a generous serving of *sanuk*.

MALAYSIA

Malaysia can seem like two countries, although over eighty per cent of its people make their home on the Malay Peninsula, which is also the site of most of the cities, major tourist attractions, and resorts.

Kuala Lumpur is a crowded, lively capital with excellent hotels, fine shopping, and a skyline that combines Victorian English and Moorish motifs. At its hub is the Central Market, an Art Deco bazaar where you can watch arts and crafts demonstrations, see a Chinese opera or a lion dance, or buy batiks and pewter. In Penang, the "Pearl of the Orient," colonial architecture vies with glorious beaches like Batu Ferringhi for a visitor's attention. Eastward are the states of Sabah and Sarawak, where one of the last wilderness areas in Southeast Asia exists.



Singapore's modern skyline

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A Chingay Dragon dance

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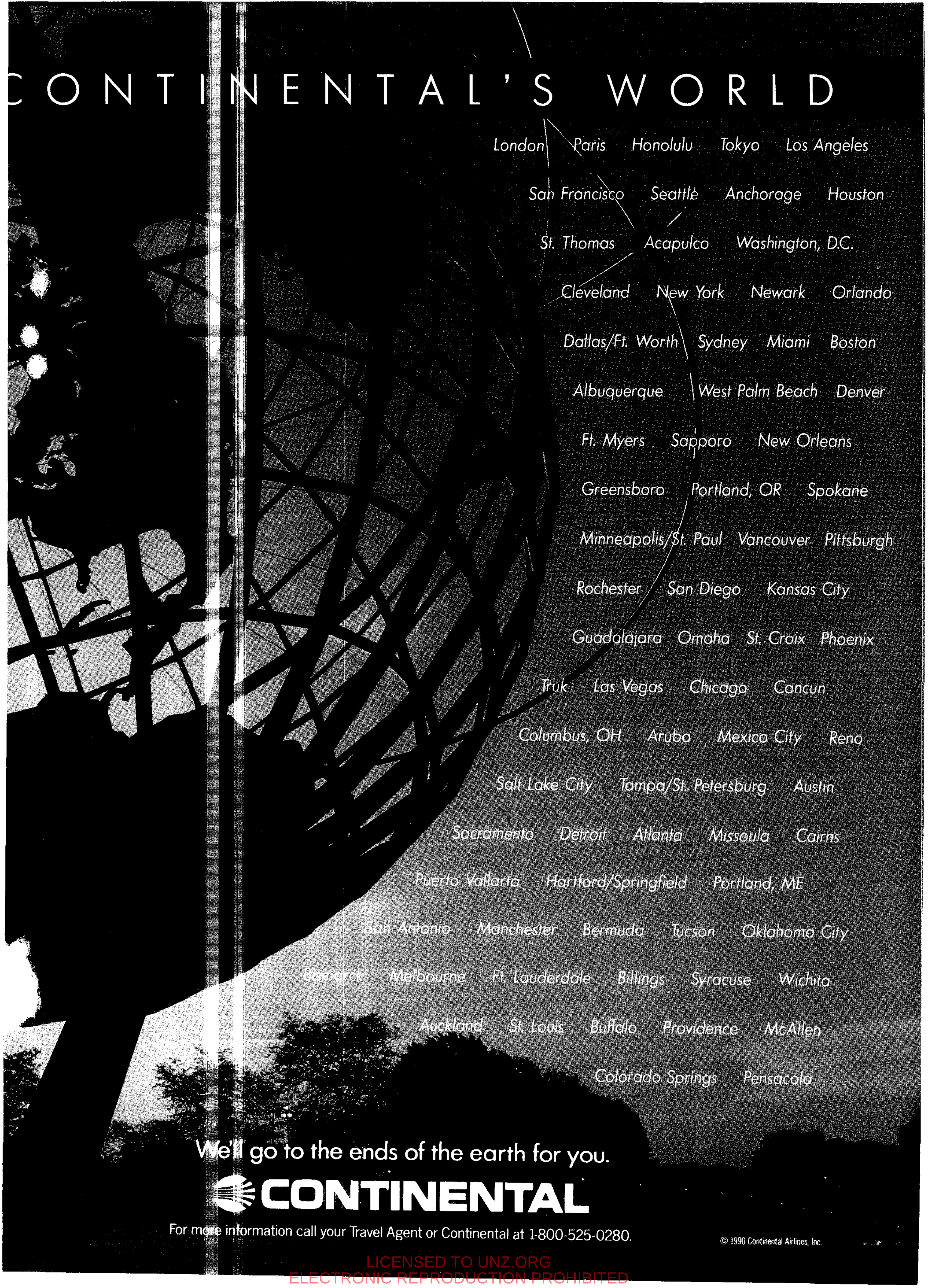
SINGAPORE

There's hardly a trace of Singapore's sleepy past in today's modern nation, whose industrious population of Chinese, Malays, and Indians have turned it into a thriving commercial center. While most Asian cities are paving over their exotic pasts, Singapore is trying to preserve the vestiges of its historic areas. Its multi-ethnic heritage survives not only in the cacophony of its four official languages, but in its culture, architecture, and ambience. It is a city of festi-



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INDONESIA

In Indonesia, the ethnic, religious, and cultural traditions of the entire Asian continent coexist in a harmonious blend of the old and the new. The more than thirteen thousand islands also feature the most varied and unique scenery, from rain forests to snow-capped mountains, green rice terraces to magnificent beaches, thriving modern cities to tiny villages. In Bali, land of five thousand temples, the basic tenets of Hinduism and an anamistic faith permeate every aspect of the culture. Balinese artisans fashion exquisite jewelry, masks, puppets, batiks, and carvings, while dancers and musicians retell age-old tales with graceful movements and the resonant tones of the *gamelan*.

From Djakarta, gateway and capital city, head to Borobudur and Prambanan, Buddhist and Hindu temples, respectively, that date from the ninth century. Close by are Jogjakarta and Solo, two of central Java's most interesting cities, rich in culture, crafts, and superb shopping and cuisine. On Sulawesi, visit the hanging graves of Tanah Toraja.

The Indonesian government has proclaimed 1991 to be Visit Indonesia Year, promoting the country with a Festival of Indonesia in fifty cities in the United States while expanding tourist facilities and eliminating many visa requirements. Indonesia is enjoying a tourist boom, but

A serimpi dancer in Solo, Indonesia

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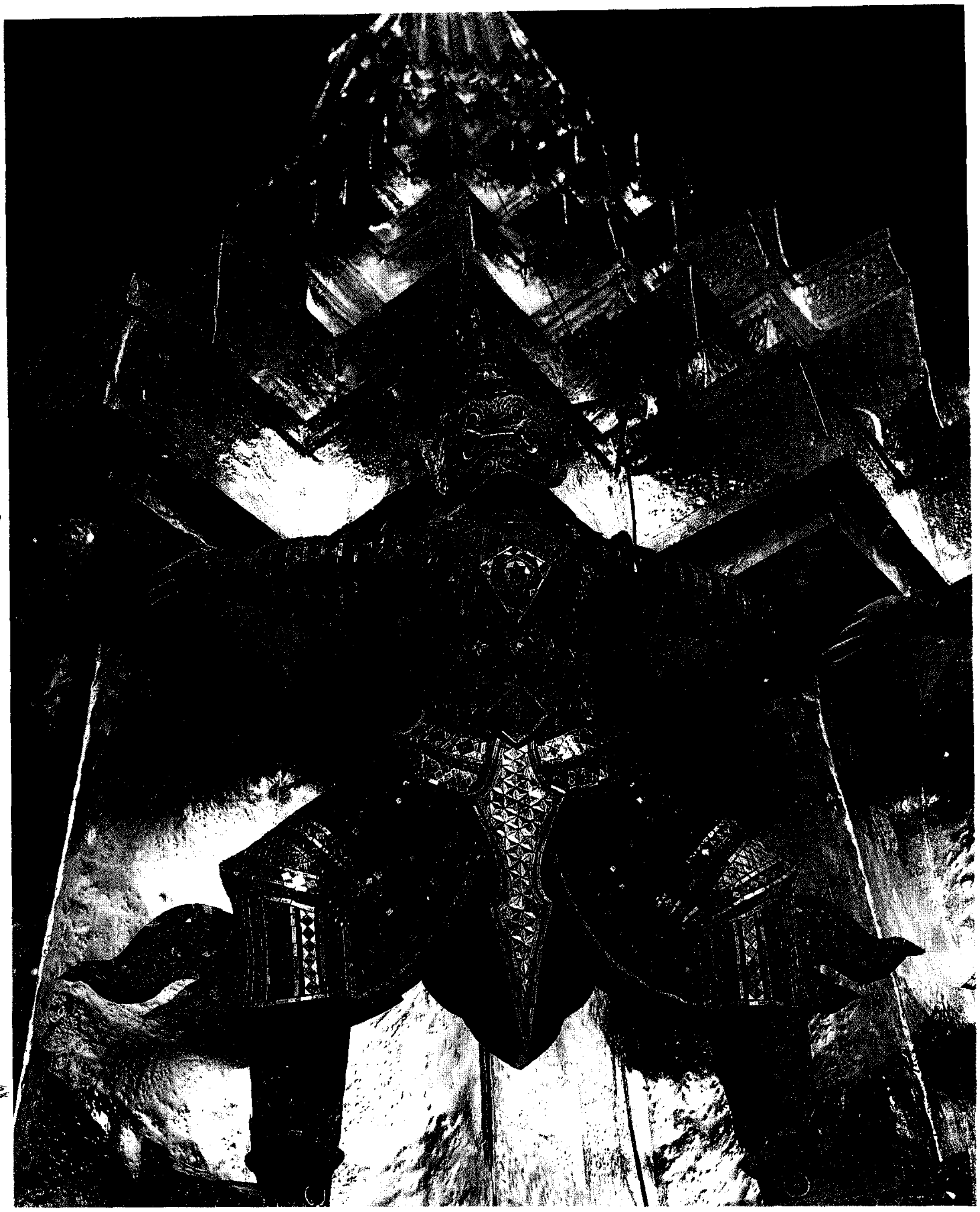

land of culture and tradition

Here the 'everyday' is filled with enchantment. Temples shimmering in the late afternoon sun; the rhythmic chanting of saffron-robed monks, the graceful movements of classical dancers.

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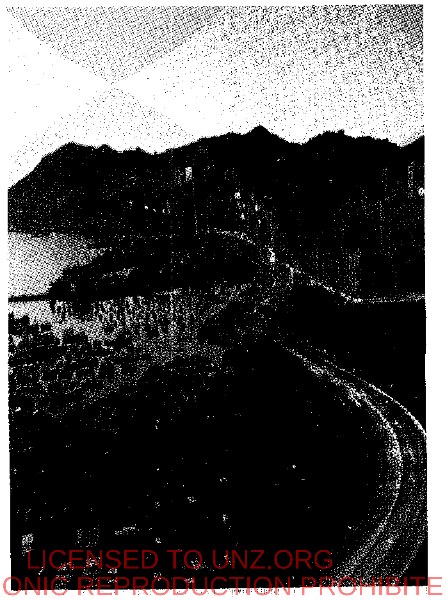
there are still exotic, primitive, and beautiful places where time seems to have stood still, and the magic and mystery of ancient cultures surround you . . . if you let them.

THE PHILIPPINES

The industry, resiliency, and ambition of Philippine Islanders, combined with the country's other natural resources, make this Pacific republic attractive. Among its assets are a tropical climate, breathtaking scenery, excellent accommodations and amenities, and fine conference and exhibition facilities. The country is one of contrasts — rice terraces and pearl farms, white sand beaches and dense tropical jungles, villages that are little more than jungle clearings and coastal towns served by steamers as they have been for a hundred years.

Hong Kong's skyline and harbor



The cosmopolitan metropolis of Manila is heavily steeped in Catholic culture but also sensuous, lively, and possessed of a nightlife as uninhibited as any in Asia. It offers the best music in the Pacific, outstanding bargains in couturier clothes, shoes, accessories, and handcrafts, and a spicy cuisine that marries Malay and Spanish cooking styles with the abundant local seafood, fruit, and rice for a piquant and unusual dining experience.

HONG KONG

While the business of Hong Kong has always been business, beneath its Westernized veneer, Hong Kong is Asian in its heart and soul, reflected as much in the tranquillity of a monastery as it is in its towering skyscrapers. Here are some of Asia's finest restaurants, greatest hotels, best shopping, and liveliest nightlife — even the busiest commercial traveller should make time to sample HK's sophisticated pleasures. Buy a thousand-year-old egg or a personally designed chop (a calligraphic name stamp) in the crowded lanes off Queen's Road, watch old men practice *t'ai chi ch'uan* in the dawn's pearly light at the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, dine in a floating restaurant, or take a *sampan* tour through the world of HK's indigenous boat

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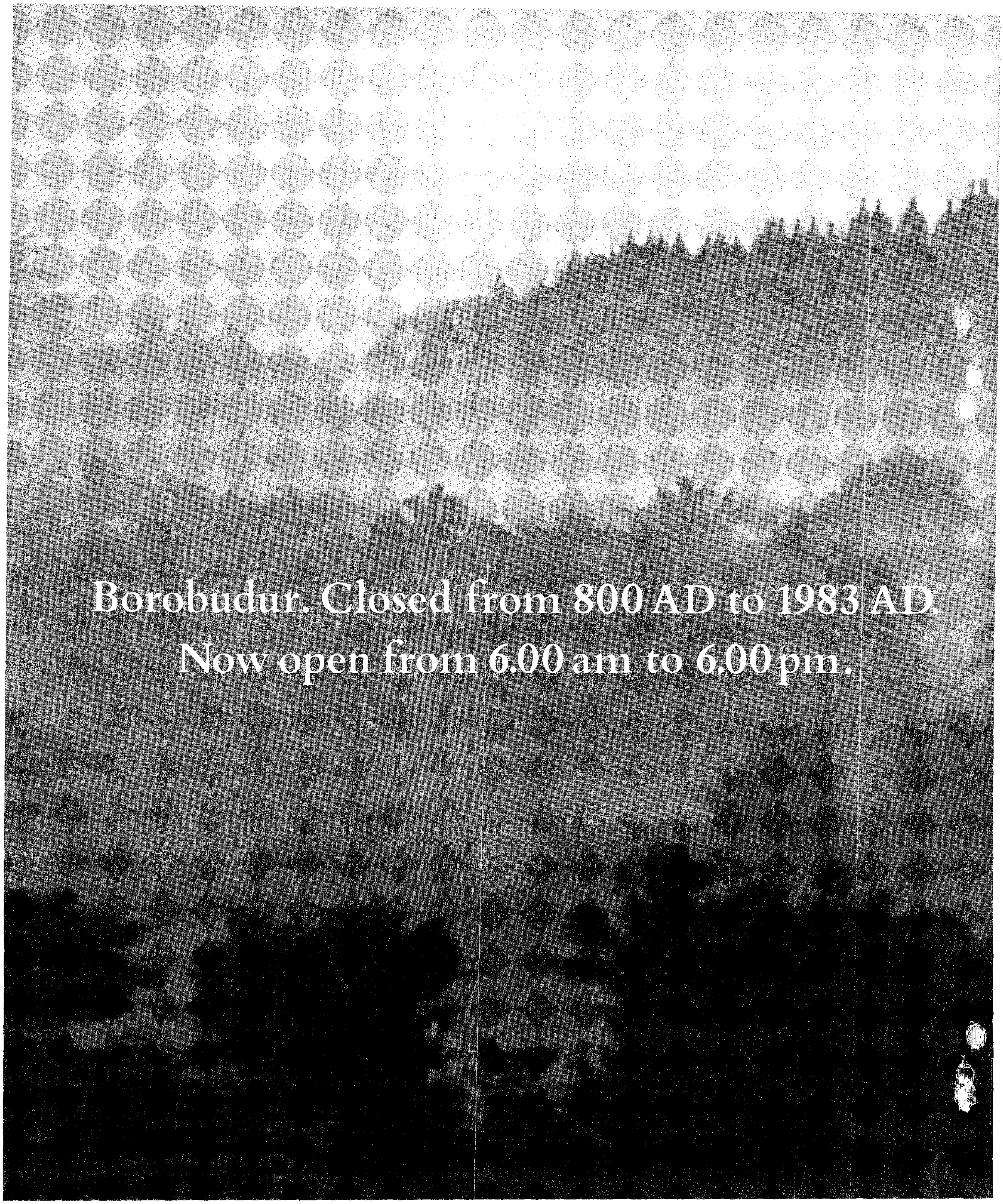
Borobudur. Closed from 800 AD to 1983 AD.
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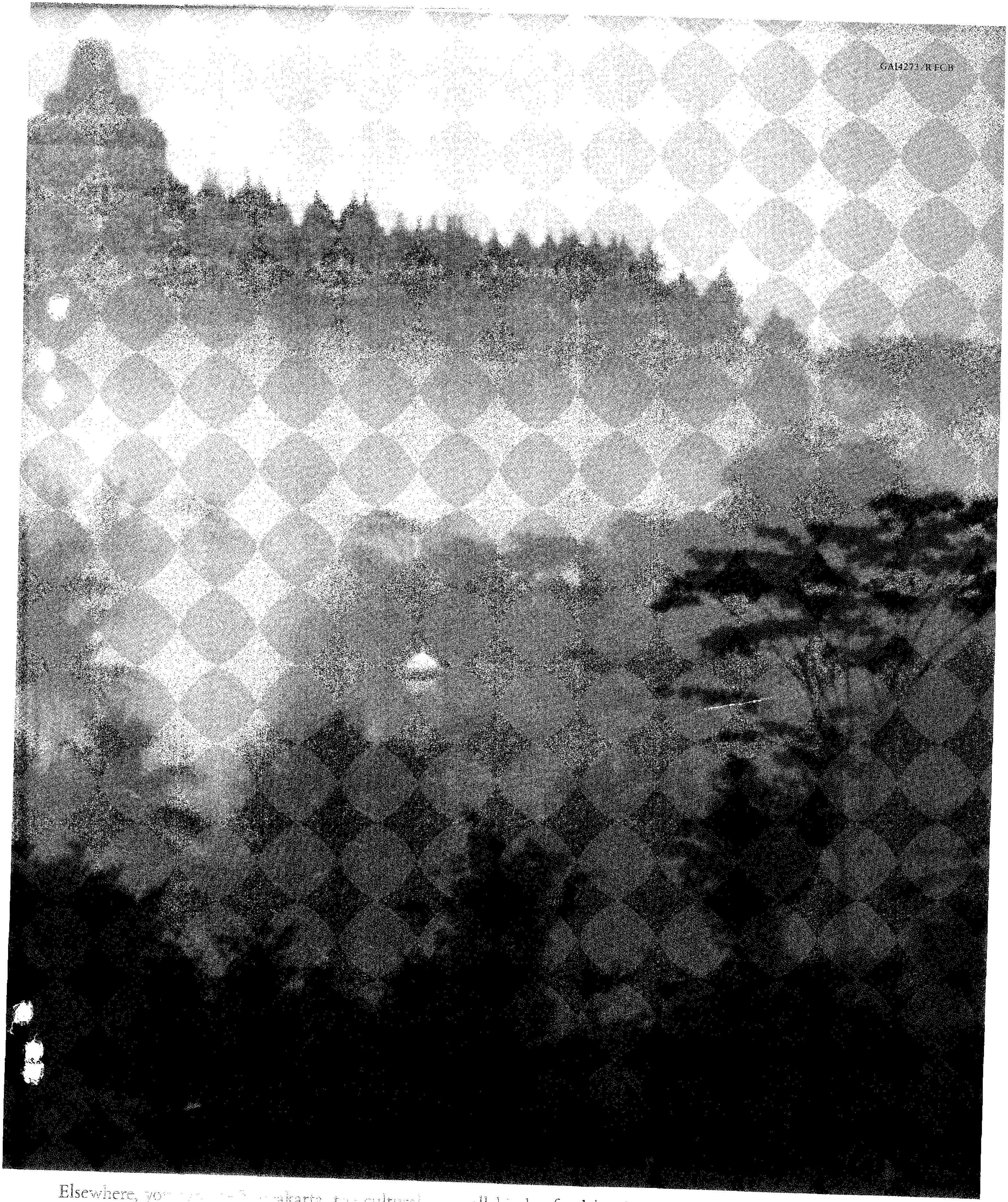
There can be few more mysterious wonders on earth than the Borobudur temple in Java.

Abandoned soon after its creation, volcanic eruptions caused it to simply sink and disappear for over one thousand years.

Fortunately, this awe-inspiring monument has now re-appeared and been restored to its former glory.

So, once again, visitors can study the remarkable stone reliefs that depict the essential beliefs and teachings of Buddhism.

Or climb the magnificent terraces to enjoy the spectacular views of the surrounding mountains.



Elsewhere, you [illegible] Yogyakarta, the cultural center of Java and home of the Kraton Palace, where the Sultan still lives today.

Close by is the mysterious Dieng Plateau which, according to folklore, is the home of demons and spirits.

1991 is Visit Indonesia Year too, so there will be all kinds of celebrations and special events to enjoy.

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A traditional opera at Temple Street Night Market

people. Hong Kong's fabled energy and excitement have not faltered as the projected 1997 hand-over to the People's Republic of China approaches; if anything, it has heightened them. No one knows precisely what the future holds, but in Asia's most cosmopolitan city, they're ready.

TAIWAN

Taiwan's thriving modern culture, as well as its storied past, attract thousands of Western visitors every year. While manufacturing and foreign trade remain the order of the day in the republic, the fabulous cuisine and varied and exotic entertainments make Taipei a night city as well. Even on a brief visit, make time for a tour of the National Palace Museum, deep in the wooded hills of Waishuanghsi — beneath its tiled roofs and within its moon gates are unique twelfth-century Chinese objets d'art and more.

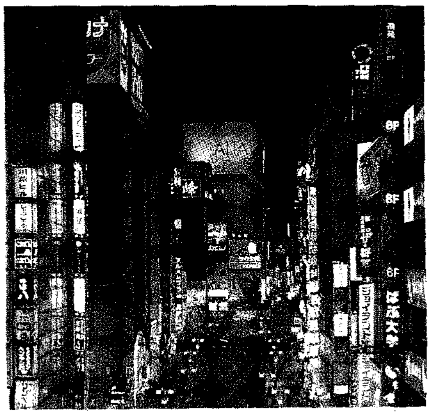
Outside the capital, Yangming Mountain National Park is famed for its magnificent gardens, while in Peitou there are hot springs hotels and masseuses. And the magnificent Taroko Gorge is worth a trip of its own just for the unparalleled vistas.

JAPAN

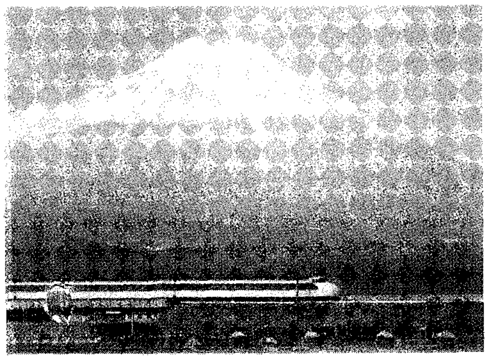
Japan's development into a global economic power is a late-twentieth-century success story, and consequently life here has become increasingly Westernized. But in many ways, the traditions and social arrangements of ancient times still find expression in the art, culture, and customs of a two-thousand-year-old civilization.

The pace of life in Tokyo and other big cities astounds most visitors. Energetic, expensive, crowded, and fast paced, urban Japan plays as hard as it works. But in the quieter corners of this big city — in the gardens, temples, inns, and shrines — travellers can find the subtle touches, the quiet oases, the understated beauty of an ancient, complex civilization. On the snow-covered slopes of the

Tokyo's bright lights beckon



courtesy Hong Kong Tourist Authority



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Japan old and new: Mt. Fuji and the bullet train

Japanese alps and in the fishing villages that line its shores, a different face of Japan emerges, one with a different skyline: thatch-roofed farms, pine-clad islands, classic Shinto shrines.

Nara and Kyoto offer a glimpse into Japan's ancient glories. In small workshops, Kyoto artisans create porcelain, fabrics, lacquerware, and pottery as they did when they served the Imperial court centuries ago. At Saihoji Temple, the oldest Zen garden in Japan has been preserved, offering a visual representation of a Buddhist paradise.

Japanese tourist facilities are elegant enough to enchant the most well-travelled guests. In every village, town, and city, the food is beautifully prepared and served, a feast for the eye as well as the palate. There is always a festival, parade, or celebration going on, or a performance of Noh, Kabuki, Bunraku, or other stylized drama. In fact, there's so much to do and see in Japan that one visit, no matter how long, is never long enough.

Celebrants at the Takayamo Festival

Courtesy Japan National Tourist Organization

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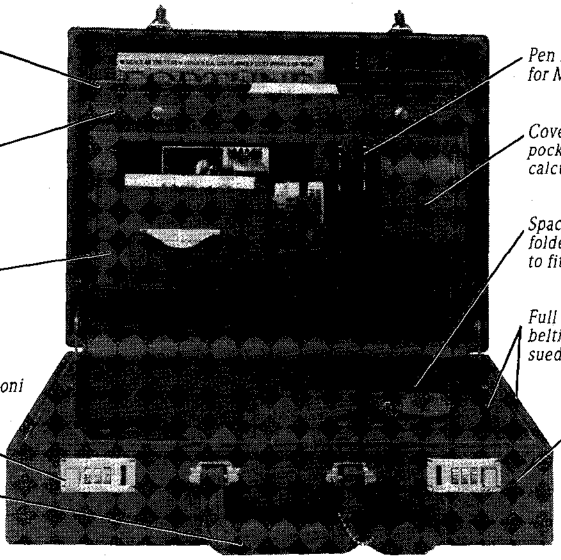
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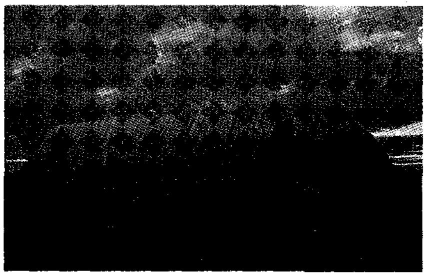
ASIA And the

the "land of the morning calm" is today one of the continent's most rapidly industrializing countries. Yet ancient traditions adhere, reinforced by



Ayers Rock is the tip of a mountain

courtesy Australian Tourist Commission

kibum, a state of respect, harmony, and patience, which characterizes business as well as personal relationships among all Koreans.

Once an eight-walled city, Seoul has markets near each of the original gates: the Great East Gate Market is home to silk vendors, while adjoining the South Gate Market is the intriguing Myong-dong district of small hotels, theatres, tea shops, and bars, where Seoul comes alive at night.

Twenty or thirty miles south of the capital are the walled city of Suwon, the Korean Folk Village, and the mountain fortress of the seventeenth-century Namhansansong Castle. And a few miles north of Pusan, the country's main seaport, T'ongdo-sa, is a monastery complex in the shadow of the rugged and beautiful Holy Eagle Mountain. Within South Korea's borders are extremes of climate and landscape. But the pride and patience of its hospitable, courteous citizens is steady and dependable throughout the entire country.

AUSTRALIA

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dney's distinctive Opera House

Sydney's clam-shell-shaped Opera House cleaves the harbor's dramatic skyline and sets a tony style for this lively, sophisticated city. To the north is Bondi Beach, the Gold Coast, and Cairns, the gateway to the diving and fishing resorts on the Reef.

In the heart of the Outback is Ayers Rock, which rises more than eleven hundred feet and is one of the most extraordinary natural phenomena in the world.

Jane Adams's latest book is Wake Up, Sleeping Beauty *(William Morrow).*

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come. Poles are terrified, not without reason, of seeing their national assets, shabby though they may be, swallowed up for next to nothing by foreign speculators (for, of course, everything in those early auctions would necessarily be selling at a considerable discount), and then perhaps plundered as well—pawed over, stripped, and sold for scrap. One journalist I spoke with, quite a worldly woman, told me that she had always found her country's disdain for Germany's entrepreneurial designs on Poland to be distasteful and exaggerated. "That is, until a few weeks ago," she said. "I was sent by my paper to cover the unification, and I travelled all around the former German Democratic Republic. It's unbelievable what the West Germans have done to that place—*and those were their brothers*. They don't even *like* us."

Joseph Farris

"It's better than my mother's cooking but not as good as my first wife's."

• •

The June bill tried to address such fears by limiting foreign ownership of a given enterprise to ten per cent of the total shares. (Would *any* foreigners be willing to invest under such a limitation? The bill did allow for waivers of the provision, granted approval by the ministry involved.) But that solution only opened out onto another problem. Two Polish-born American academics—Roman Frydman and Andrzej Rapaczynski—have calculated that even if all Poles were to prove willing to invest between twenty and thirty per cent of their life savings in shares of privatized enterprises—"a very optimistic assumption," as they say—"the amount of money available for purchase of the state companies would equal between 2.4 and 3.6 per cent of their book value." The point is that there's not enough capital in Poland to sustain a standard British-style capitalization. And the government seems to realize this, for, despite glowing predictions of a hundred privatizations in process by this time, only seven are currently under way. Meanwhile, the government has embarked on a policy of selling the most appealing enterprises first—a policy that portends even greater problems down the road, when the government will be left with just the really desperate cases.

In the months following the passage of the privatization law, as various theorists pondered dilemmas such as these, they returned once again to basics. What, after all, was the point of the whole exercise? Not to foster private fortunes but, rather, to instill discipline in enterprises, to enforce efficiency, to promote the sort of restructuring that could eventually lead to a freely functioning market, with its resultant general prosperity. (So, anyway, went the premise.) And they began to realize that in the West there were actually two separate functions involved—ownership and control. Shareholders in the West "own" the companies, but control—the supervision and disciplining of management—is exercised by a board of directors on their behalf. The identities of the individual shareholders, and their profits, aren't as important as the efficiency of the control exercised on their behalf by the board of directors. So why *sell* the shares at all, why not just distribute them freely—as long as the resultant shareholders then display their natural interest in seeing that the board of directors supervises and controls management (and that management, in turn, disciplines and controls the work force), all to the benefit of everyone's individual stake?

Various proposals sprouted up. One of the more ambitious was described to me by Jeffrey Sachs, who developed it with his colleague David Lipton, in conjunction with several economists at the Finance Ministry. They began by noting that, in a way, nobody owns most companies in the West; that is to say, very few large companies are owned by a single individual or a group of individuals. The Ford family no longer owns the vast majority of Ford Motors. In fact, most companies are owned largely by varying configurations of institutional investors—life-insurance companies, mutual funds, pension funds. One could imagine launching Polish capitalism through a primitive sale of shares to individuals and millionaires, on the assumption that, the world being as it is, over a period of years the Poles would reinvent the entire system of institutional investing for themselves. But wouldn't it be more effective to create an entire framework of institutional investors from scratch—for the government simply to establish insurance associations and pension funds and banks, grant them independence (along with various institutional responsibilities), and infuse capitalist life into the entire system through a free distribution of shares? Take, say, the top five hundred companies, corporatize all of them, set aside twenty per cent of the shares in each for the workers, and then

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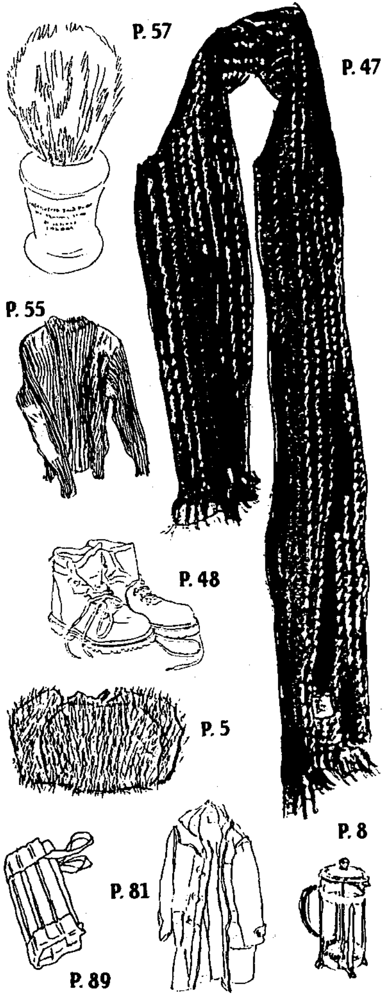

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turn over *x* per cent to the insurance companies, *y* per cent to the pension funds, and *z* per cent to the banks. The population at large could receive twenty per cent to recompense them for their years of suffering. They could receive their shares in the form of vouchers, with which they might invest, individually, in whatever companies they chose. Or, better yet—since the whole point of the exercise was to focus control—five mutual funds could be established, and the general population's twenty per cent could be divided equally among them, each citizen getting a free share in one of the funds. The government, for its part, could withhold a certain percentage of shares, selling them off at some moment down the line to a "core investor." The point is that the process wouldn't get bogged down in case-by-case settlements, where workers allied with managers would be in a position to engage in an extended war of attrition. There would be *no need for prior* valuations: the whole thing could start up just like that, ex nihilo, and at the end of the day you'd have large institutional investors wielding blocks of stocks and exercising control through various boards of directors.

The plan had its critics, even among those who favored the idea of free distribution. (Sachs and Lipton were by no means the first or the only ones to come up with that idea.) Rapaczynski and Frydman, for example, offered a counterproposal. One afternoon, over drinks at the Marriott, Rapaczynski offered me his critique of the Sachs-Lipton proposal (which I'd heard about only a few days earlier, in that same café): To begin with, there aren't enough experts in Poland to run the program. Poland is filled with industrial managers, many of them quite competent. (It's simply that in many cases they have never been allowed to manage.) What it lacks absolutely is financial managers—people experienced in running such things as mutual funds, pension funds, and insurance companies. In fact, Rapaczynski went on, the country desperately needs to *find some way of training such people,* and quickly—though putting novices entirely in charge of such institutions is probably not such a great idea. More problematical still, however, is the stultifyingly bureaucratic cast of Sachs' formulation and, despite his assurances of institutional independence, its decidedly statist complexion. The state would set up these various bureaucracies, and, in the end, striking workers would be in a position to demand that the state revoke the bureaucracies' charters or force them to alter their policies. Instead, Rapaczynski and Frydman were offering a plan under the slogan "Privatize privatization!"

In essence, they were proposing that foreign banks and institutions—such [illegible] Citibank, Deutsche Bank, and Salomon Brothers—be invited to participate actively in Poland's privatization process, by setting up their own mutual funds, on [illegible] for-profit basis. The larger state enterprises would all be put up for auction (*in tranches* perhaps, two hundred at a time, the auctions separated by several-month intervals). All Polish citizens would receive nondenominated vouchers, which they could then invest through brokerage houses or else by way of the largely foreign-managed mutual funds. Those funds would compete with one another both in soliciting vouchers (offering better terms, mounting clearer advertising campaigns) and in evaluating the potential profitability of each of the privatizing firms; in the end, they would stand to profit from the commissions they'd receive on the eventual yields of their funds. The auctions themselves, fairly complex affairs, would be so arranged that by their conclusion each of the privatized enterprises would have two or three large "active" shareholders, each holding twenty to thirty per cent of the shares and supervising the management (and one another), along with a smattering of miscellaneous other investors. The institutional investors would thereupon nominate a board of directors for each enterprise, according to the weight of their various stakes in it. The privatized enterprises would suddenly ta[illegible] on relative values with respect to ea[illegible] other, and the institutions could immediately start trading their holdings. The mutual funds, too, would take on relative values. Presto: the creation of a market.

Rapaczynski cited several advantages to his proposal. To begin with, an influx of foreign expertise in precisely the area where Poles are most in need of exposure and training (presumably the international firms would quickly take on Polish apprentices),

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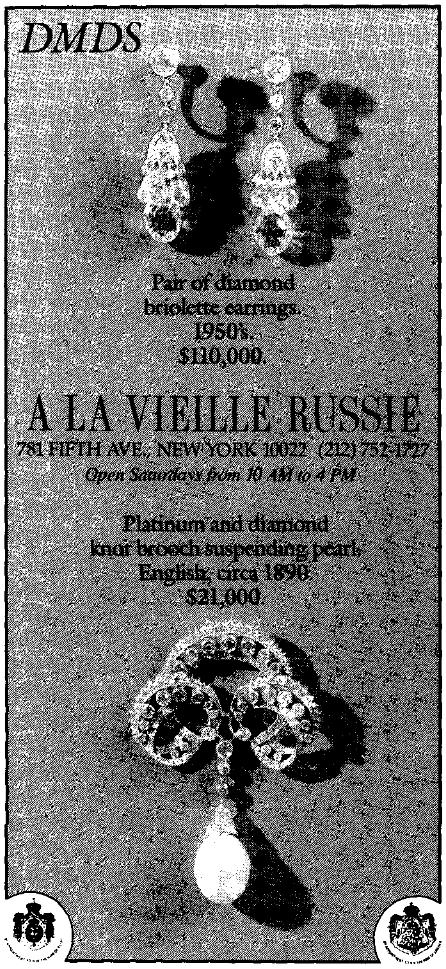
this without having to surrender any of the precious national assets to foreign entrepreneurs: Poles alone would continue to own Poland. Second, a wealth of invaluable foreign connections: Deutsche Bank, for instance, could help arrange contacts between its Western clients and the enterprises where it held plurality control, and that would be in everybody's interest. And, perhaps sweetest of all, the various institutional investors, as long as they were setting up offices all over Poland anyway, as part of their efforts to solicit vouchers, could be encouraged to hang out their shingles for more conventional sorts of banking activities as well: to offer checking accounts, credit cards, business loans, home mortgages (perhaps under preferred terms for their voucher customers)—just the kinds of services that Poland so desperately needs. Overnight: a normal, functioning, competitive banking system.

Of course, this plan, too, has its critics. Many, Ryszard Bugaj among them, question the entire premise of a free distribution of vouchers, on the ground that poor people would be likely to sell theirs to rich fellow-citizens simply in order to put chicken on tonight's dinner table; that rich people would hence amass hoards of vouchers at ridiculously deflated prices; and that the whole process would therefore only exacerbate the country's growing polarization of wealth. (No problem, says Rapaczynski. Make the vouchers nontransferrable, and any trades legally unenforceable.) Another question raised about the plan is this: On what basis is one to assume that financiers would have the long-term health of companies they invested in foremost in their hearts? Wasn't the whole story of the American eighties proof of just the opposite—a proclivity for short-term, slash-and-burn forays precisely at the expense of everybody's longer-term interests? Not necessarily, Rapaczynski replies. There are in fact two possible patterns of institutional control over enterprises, the "weak" and the "strong." In the weak system—exemplified by the United States, with its heritage of populist hostility to banks—financial institutions are allowed to own only a very small percentage of any given company and are strictly hemmed in by regulations regarding the other sorts of dealings they can have with the company. As a result, the only way to exercise effective discipline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over managers often becomes the hostile takeover or the corporate raid. In strong systems, by contrast, banks and other financial institutions are positively encouraged to take commanding positions on the boards of companies in which they invest, to exercise hands-on control, and to steer deals between clients. That's the sort of system that prevails in Japan and also in Germany, where, for example, Deutsche Bank controls almost thirty per cent of Daimler-Benz. Not a bad precedent.

Both privatization schemes, of course, face another sort of criticism. After all, they are schemes aimed at disciplining Polish workers, in some cases brutally, in the headlong rush toward capitalism. (Martin Wolf recently observed in an article in the *Financial Times* how, ironically, the term "Leninist" might well be applied to the sort of task Solidarity's government has set itself: "When Lenin seized power in the Soviet Union he initiated a revolution in the name of a class, the proletariat, that did not as yet exist. . . . Now in Poland a revolution—more precisely, a counterrevolution—is being attempted in the name of an as yet nonexistent capitalist class.") In the light of recent developments, is the unadulterated capitalist system such a great ideal? To put it mildly, Eastern Europe happens to be merging into the mainstream of capitalism at a decidedly odd and dicey moment in the history of capitalism.

THIS was, in fact, a very good time to hold an election, to return to the populace and seek its guidance on some of the significant questions of public governance which have emerged over the past year. And the important issues are not limited to the economy and privatization. There is also the question of abortion, for example (a law criminalizing the heretofore extremely common practice has passed the Polish senate and is awaiting action in the lower house), and the question of religious instruction in public schools (an edict not just allowing such instruction but, in practice, virtually mandating it recently came down from Mazowiecki's Education Ministry, without any parliamentary review at all), and, more generally speaking, the question of what role the Catholic Church ought properly to assume in the nascent Polish democracy.

I was surprised, actually, at how much resentment I encountered against these new tendencies in church-state affairs. In Lodz, for example, the women in the textile plant were virtually unanimous in their condemnation of both developments. "No sooner do we get rid of that Red Mafia," said one woman, a crucifix dangling on her chest, "than we get saddled with this black one."

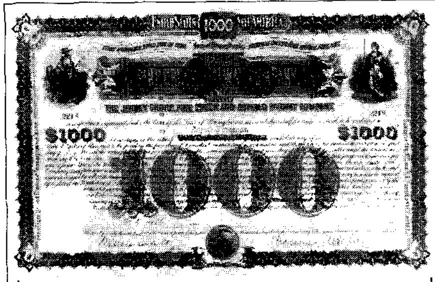
"Yeah, it's the priests—they want to come to power," another said. "Soon it's going to be Cardinal Glemp declaring martial law."

And a third said, "We believe in God, not in priests."

This last comment dovetailed with one I subsequently heard from a sociologist who has been following the results of a series of focus groups convened among random voters in anticipation of the coming election. "We're beginning to track a very strong groundswell of anger at the clergy," he told me. "We used to talk about the way Communism had given the Polish Church its second virginity. Now it appears that the fall of Communism is having the opposite effect, however you'd phrase that. It's interesting. We're beginning to return to a pattern from before the Second World War—we're becoming a country that is both profoundly Catholic and profoundly anticlerical."

And yet, despite the public resentment—*in the case of abortion, polls were showing fifty-one per cent opposed to the law—none of the principal political formations seemed willing to* take on such issues during the Presidential campaign. Nor did there seem *to be any way of framing questions* about the economy or privatization, either—framing them, that is, in such *a way that people could be given strong* enough alternative visions that their vote one way or the other might signify something. *Instead, there was plenty* of talk about how "Polish" one side or the other was: it became that kind of campaign.

A lot of Poles couldn't figure out *what* the campaign was about. A lot of them grew increasingly disgusted by the whole thing—betrayed by and angry at both ROAD and Centrum. Some columnists started likening the feelings of many voters to those of children in a family where the parents have fallen out and are heading toward divorce: the kids just want all the yelling to stop;



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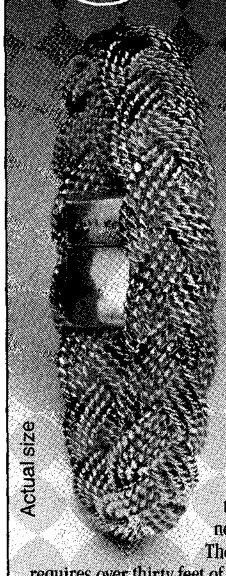
they are reeling in their hurt and confusion.

There were always substantial class differences within Solidarity. In fact, those differences were precisely what Solidarity's solidarity bridged. That was the essence of its miracle. For decades before 1980, the Communists had succeeded in playing Poland's intelligentsia off against its workers, and it was only as a result of dogged organizational work by a small number of embattled activists on both sides of the divide, starting around 1976, that workers and intellectuals were able to find each other and to understand not only the urgency but also the compatibility of each other's core concerns. In August of 1980, striking workers made an end to censorship one of their Twenty-one Demands, and intellectuals, for their part, rushed up to offer themselves as technical advisers to the strike committees. Solidarity had indeed been forged.

All along, however, essential class differences between workers and intellectuals remained, and, if anything, they have become exacerbated over the last several years. Although 1989's Round Table negotiations between the government and the opposition were provoked by a series of worker strikes the previous year, the opposition's negotiating team at those talks drew overwhelmingly on the intelligentsia side of the movement; and both the opposition caucus within Parliament, elected in June of 1989, and the Mazowiecki Cabinet, installed in September, were top-heavy with intelligentsia, as opposed to worker, participation. Beyond that, intellectuals in general—able as they are to draw on a range of technocratic skills, linguistic aptitudes, and far-flung worldly contacts—do seem to stand a considerably better chance of navigating the tricky rapids involved in the coming transition to a free market than do their worker counterparts on those outmoded assembly lines.

A straightforward intelligentsia-versus-worker dichotomy might well have been expected to emerge in the new Poland, but that's not what the ROAD-Centrum split appeared to be about. For one thing, several top worker activists—notably Warsaw's Zbigniew Bujak and Wroclaw's Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, who were until just recently the second- and third-ranking figures in the Solidarity trade union—occupied key positions in the



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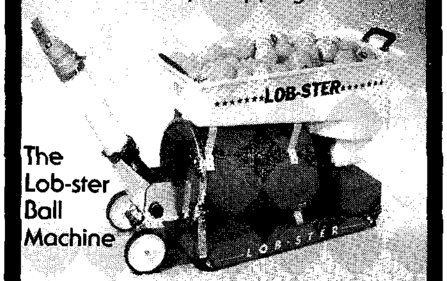

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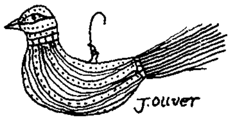
pro-Mazowiecki ROAD; and, similarly, such leading intellectuals as the eminent Conrad scholar Zdzislaw Najder and the brilliant sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis could be found among Walesa's partisans on the Centrum side. Still, there *was* a decidedly anti-intelligentsia slant to much of the rhetoric coming out of Centrum, a contempt for the bumbling ineffectuality of the intellectuals in power. When, for example, I spoke with Staniszkis, who is currently serving on Walesa's board of advisers, she was utterly dismissive of the "pretentiousness and provincialism" of intellectuals like Michnik, who, she said, "are endlessly discoursing on ethics and ethos—things that have nothing to do with real-life politics, categories that may have once served a function in opposition but are a positive hindrance now. No, we have to move from consensus to conflict."



But not, as one might initially have thought, a conflict between the intelligentsia and the workers. Rather, what many Centrum figures found fault with in ROAD people was their mushy-headed hesitancies on behalf of the workers—in effect, their trepidation about a full-throttle transition to the free market. "Centrum doesn't intend to be a party for workers," Staniszkis declared baldly. "If anything, it's non-unionist, it favors the cultivation and promotion of small entrepreneurial activity, the creation of new êlites from below, *and then getting out of their way*." Centrum's attitude toward Balcerowicz, the architect of Mazowiecki's current free-market transition, was revealing. When I asked Jaroslaw Kaczynski, a key Centrum strategist, whether Walesa, as President, would want to fire Balcerowicz, he replied, "Not necessarily," going on to say that, in fact, he might well want to promote him to the Prime Ministership. Others spoke of letting Balcerowicz be Balcerowicz; which is to say, letting him be more radical in his pursuit of initiatives that could undercut immediate working-class interests than "he's been allowed to be" up till now. (ROAD, incidentally, also entertained the prospect of a Balcerowicz Prime Ministership should Mazowiecki have been elevated to the Presidency. For that matter, I encountered enthusiastic advocates of Rapaczynski's plan, considered more radical than anything Balcerowicz would ever entertain, among both Centrum and ROAD activists.) "The thing that has to be done," said Staniszkis, "is to emphasize development over stabilization, to clear a path for the winners and *to demobilize the losers*"—the losers being all those industrial workers who would quickly be losing their jobs were the development process to accelerate.

An additional irony in all this is that not all small entrepreneurs necessarily favored Walesa for President. Many, such as my importer acquaintance, found him too temperamental, too unpredictable, too mercurial; they worried that he would upset international lenders and investors, and also that he had made too many promises to too many constituencies. As for the workers themselves, especially at the large plants, no doubt more supported Walesa's candidacy than Mazowiecki's (several of Walesa's often contradictory promises had been intended to allay their fears), but there were many who were disillusioned with both candidates and seemed to be drifting, in search of a plausible alternative.

If simple class divisions proved of little value in defining the Centrum-ROAD split, standard ideological distinctions offered not much more help. The journalist Hanna Krall shrewdly observed that in Poland today "people like Mazowiecki [and his social-welfare minister, the longtime oppositionist Jacek] Kuron . . . whose personalities have a leftist orientation, are implementing the free-market program, whereas the opposing rightists associated with the Centrum have a program aimed at safeguarding social security." Walesa was continually telling workers at the big plants that there mustn't be any further unemployment. "It is an upside-down situation," Krall continued. "How can there be any worthwhile results when everyone seems to be doing things that are the exact opposite of his or her natural tendencies?" Konstanty Gebert, a psychologist and one of the most canny of political columnists, has noted that in Poland today the left often supports the introduction of free-market mechanisms as a prerequisite for the social-democratic policies it might want to champion in the future (the ROAD activist Jan Litynski told a radical free-marketeer last year, "We will institute

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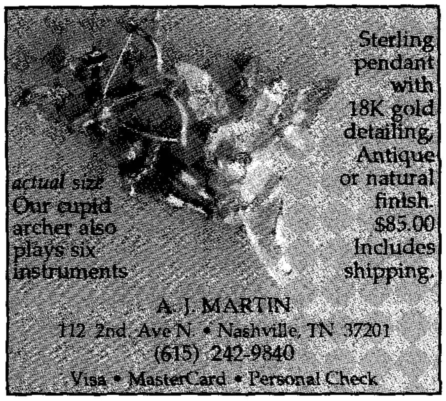

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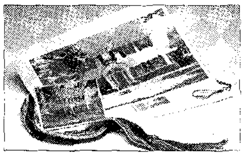

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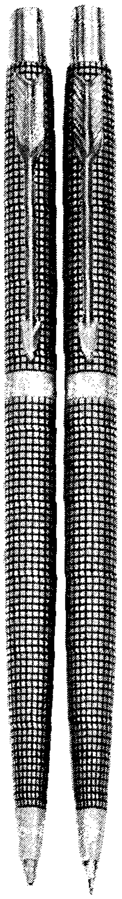
every single one of your reforms, knowing full well that we will spend the rest of our lives fighting their consequences"), whereas the right has proved somewhat timorous about headlong privatization, although, Gebert said, "its motivations are nationalistic, not social: [it] fears a sellout of the national economy to foreign capital." At any rate, just who was likely to support or oppose Walesa's candidacy remained highly unpredictable, for in fact there were several "rightist" leaders and organizations that came out for Mazowiecki, while an organization as opposed to privatization as Network was backing Walesa.

One reason it was so difficult to put a standard frame around Poland's electoral campaign—whether of class or ideology or anything else—was that Walesa himself was all over the map, promising everything to everybody. His program could have been summarized as having essentially two elements. First: hit the accelerator. Second: hit the brakes. On the one hand, accelerate the process of privatization, break through all the bottlenecks, full speed ahead. On the other hand, do nothing that might increase unemployment, nothing that might further undercut anyone's living standard, nothing that might cause any added suffering—Poles have suffered enough. He would take these seemingly opposite stands not on alternate days, or even in alternate speeches, but, rather, within a single speech or interview, often within a single sentence. "The thing you have to understand is that Walesa himself doesn't know what he intends to do," Gebert suggests. "He has no world view, no ideological commitments, no program. He is a consummate improviser. He doesn't mind contradicting himself, because he has complete confidence that when the moment comes he'll know what to do and, furthermore, that he'll be right. This is not a question of egomania with him—it's theology. I'm serious: he authentically seems to believe that over the past several years he has been serving as the vessel of God's will in Polish history."

And, in a way, it began to seem that the whole election was simply going to be about Walesa—whether people agreed or disagreed with his estimation of himself as Poland's destined savior. Centrum came into existence principally to advance a Walesa candidacy; ROAD came into existence almost exclu-



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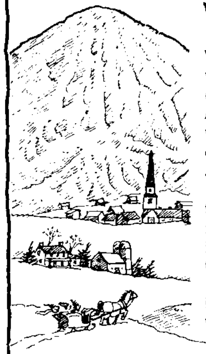

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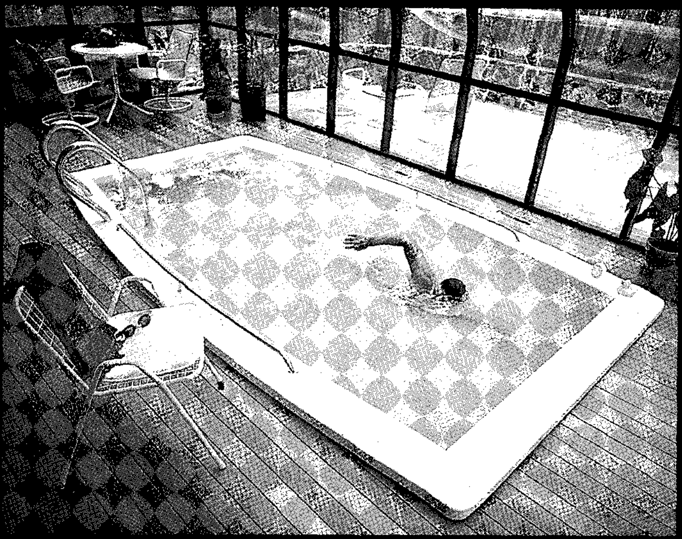
sively to forestall it. Michnik declared frankly, "It's not as important that Mazowiecki become President as that Walesa be prevented from becoming President."

Opponents of Walesa disagreed about the origin of the debilitating handicaps that they now so clearly saw in him. Some claimed that they had come into being only recently—that over the last year or so he'd gone "mad with envy," as one put it, or "crazy with the lust for power," as did another. They often cited Václav Havel's ascendancy to the Presidency of Czechoslovakia as the moment when Walesa broke. It is true that in interview after interview around that time Walesa seemed to be gagging on the injustice of a situation in which Havel had made it to the Castle while "Walesa, the Nobel laureate"—he often refers to himself not only in the third person but with heroic epithets—had yet to make it to the Presidency of the country that had started it all.

Some of Walesa's onetime colleagues in the government in Warsaw who were convinced that he had now gone crazy blamed themselves: if only they had made a point of regularly going up to Gdansk, to consult with him and pay him homage and show the proper deference, perhaps none of this would have happened. But they were so busy, there was so much else to do, so little time. It is no doubt the case that the behavior of much of the governing élite over the past year often played on Walesa's darkest suspicions; he had every reason to imagine that these intellectuals had been using him all along, playing him for a fool—they'd used him to gain power, and now that they had gained it they were content to just throw him away.

Even among those who opposed Walesa, however, not everyone believed that he had undergone some terrible metamorphosis. "He was always like this, from the start," Gebert told me. "He never had any patience with due process. He was always short-circuiting democratic procedure. It's not that he's anti-democratic, he's *a*democratic—an utterly ademocratic leader at the heart of a profoundly democratic movement. It was remarkable. And yet"—Gebert paused for a moment—"one has to admit: there would never have been a Solidarity without Walesa."

Some of those who'd admired Walesa



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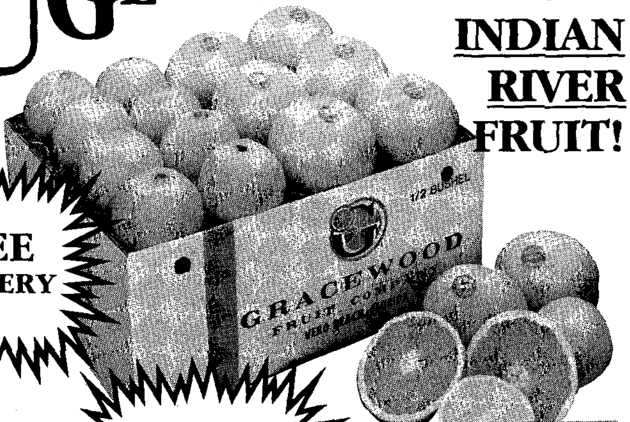

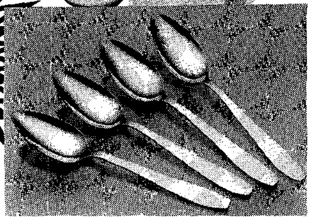

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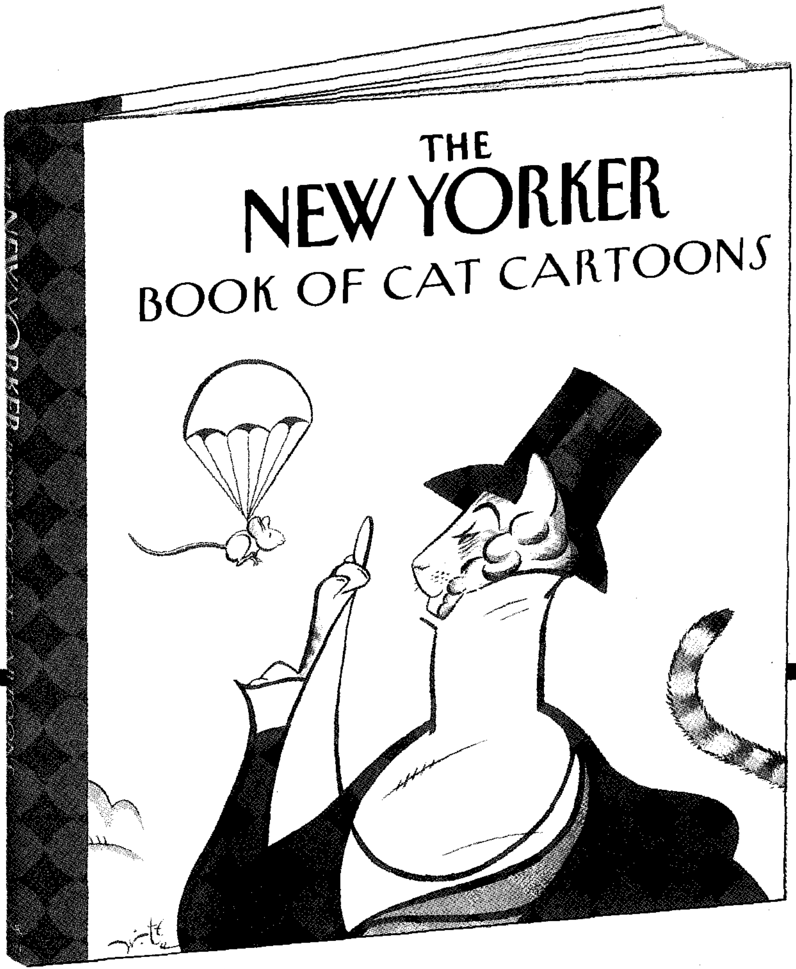
in the past and didn't think that he had changed particularly still felt that those qualities of peremptory decisiveness and wily combativeness which had served him and everyone else so well in opposition were the very ones that now rendered him unsuitable for the office of the Presidency—an office that they felt called for quiet judiciousness and calm tolerance. There were, however, other people who, while acknowledging Walesa's often nerve-rackingly authoritarian style, still insisted that at every key moment in the opposition's history he had risen to the occasion and showed himself to be a man both capable of self-limitation and appreciative of the splendors of peace and pluralism. To the extent that the current election cycle began to turn into a referendum on the character of Walesa himself, it seemed to be driven by evaluations like these.

SOME people had a theory about the coming election and the turn that politics had taken in Poland lately. They suggested that the Mazowiecki government may have bent so far over backward to avoid wholesale purges of former Communists that in the end not enough slots were opened up to allow for the advancement of mid-level opposition activists. Throughout the country, manifestly despised managers who had attained their positions only through their standing in the *nomenklatura*—a standing they had obtained through slavish devotion to the Party and had retained through continuing acts of servility—were allowed to keep their positions. Meanwhile, opposition activists who had worked indefatigably and at great personal sacrifice—often being fired, and sometimes even jailed, at the order of those same *nomenklatura* types—were blocked from power altogether. Instead of being allowed to join the team transforming the country, they remained outside, with a growing sense of resentment. And these people came to form the backbone of Centrum. They identified with Walesa, who by all rights ought to be President instead of General Jaruzelski. Similarly, they ought to be managing this, that, or the other division of their own enterprise in lieu of the clown who was still there.

While this interpretation may be somewhat schematic, it is definitely the case that the question of what



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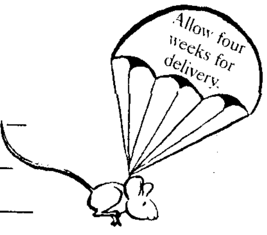
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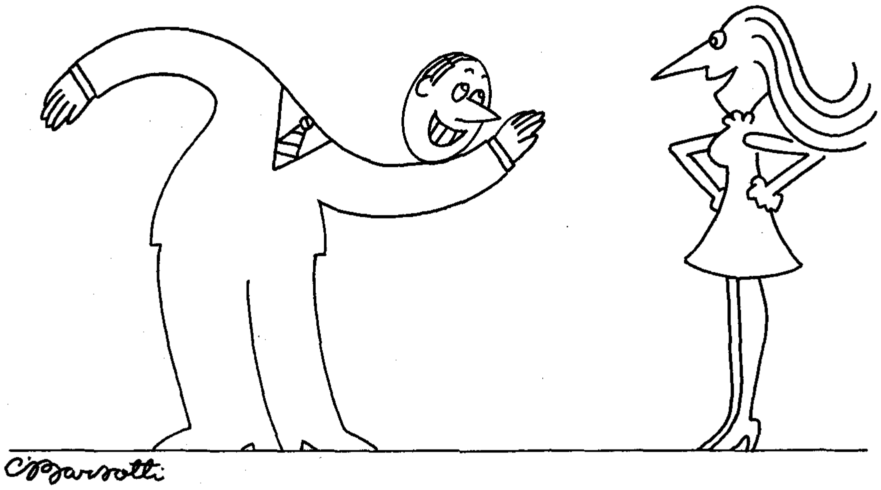


"Well, darn, Ted, I just can't stay mad at you."

• •

should have been done about the members of the *nomenklatura*, and what should be done with them in the future, was an authentic campaign issue—one on which the principal sides took identifiably different positions. The term *nomenklatura* became a fairly elastic one. Originally, it had referred solely to the top managers of all the big enterprises and ministries—people who literally weren't allowed to hold such positions unless their names appeared on a Party-approved list of something under a hundred thousand people. Gradually, however, it took on a broader and broader meaning, and Walesa and others now use it to suggest a confluence of status, relative material prosperity, and a history of perceived collaboration of almost any sort with the prior regime. It could be seen as involving as many as two million people and their families, perhaps as much as ten per cent of the country's population.

Members of this group argue that to lump them all together indiscriminately obscures the fact that there were tremendous divisions within the ruling class during the Communist era; that the only way to carry out certain kinds of social and economic activities that were necessary for the continuing functioning of the society as a whole (the construction of this bridge or that school, for example) was to coöperate with the authorities; and that there are *nomenklaturas*, so to speak, in every country—powerful leaders whose power derives in large part from their contacts with other leaders.

The basic problem is that Poles do not enter the transition on a level playing field. Proponents of a capitalist economy may claim that it offers everyone greater opportunities for advancement, but it's obvious that it offers the best such opportunities to those who start with greater material advantages or wider contacts or higher positions. And in Poland those are in many cases the *nomenklatura* types, generally conceived—people who benefitted from their status under the earlier regime. Besides, there have been thousands of cases, during the period of transition, of managers' using their positions to pull off insider deals of one sort or another, such as selling off the choicest sections of their factories to joint-venture investors from abroad at ridiculously reduced prices, quitting, and then turning up in the new private companies as senior officers with huge salaries. The sheer extent of that sort of chicanery turned many workers against the very notion of privatization; at many enterprises, privatization came to mean simply trading the state boss for a private boss who was the same person. Mazowiecki's government was slow to respond to scams of this sort in the beginning, though now laws have been passed in an effort to prevent them and there are fewer instances of the most blatant practices. Still, there is a tremendous amount of resentment against the *nomenklatura* among the people of Poland, a longing for a wider settling of accounts, and it was this longing that Walesa addressed with his promises of wholesale purges and rule by decree—what he took to calling "justice with an axe."

Adam Michnik was one of those who opposed this approach most strongly. "There was a certain price we paid for the process of leaving Communism without violence, without bloodshed, and part of it was that we would not engage in this sort of wholesale vengeance," he told me. "In cases where laws have been broken—fine. Such people should be indicted and tried, the law should take its course. But we have to remain a nation of laws—that is of crucial importance. There is, beyond that, the question of qualified personnel. There are only so many competent and experienced people in this country. In many cases, they gained their competence and experience through the work they were doing under the previous regime, and the victorious opposition has no one with similar experience and similar competence to offer in their stead. In addition, for the sake of our future democratic order, the logic of revenge simply mustn't apply. We desperately need to take advantage of the best that everybody has to offer, and not exclude large numbers of otherwise skilled people because of their prior activities. We don't have that luxury. Finally—and perhaps this is the key point—hatred destroys not only those who are its targets but also, inevitably, those who do the hating. And we could easily end up destroying ourselves if we continue too far down that road."

"What is he talking about—*competent*?" one of Michnik's opponents on this issue asked me when I told him of Michnik's comments. "What competence? These are the geniuses who got us into this mess. If they were so competent, why is this country such a mess?" Bogdan Borusewicz, a prominent Gdansk activist, suggested that mere technical competence could be overrated as a leadership quality. "In our region," he said, "we've found that where managers have been changed things operate better, and there's less trouble, even when the new managers are less experienced, because they have more authority—and authority is what matters."

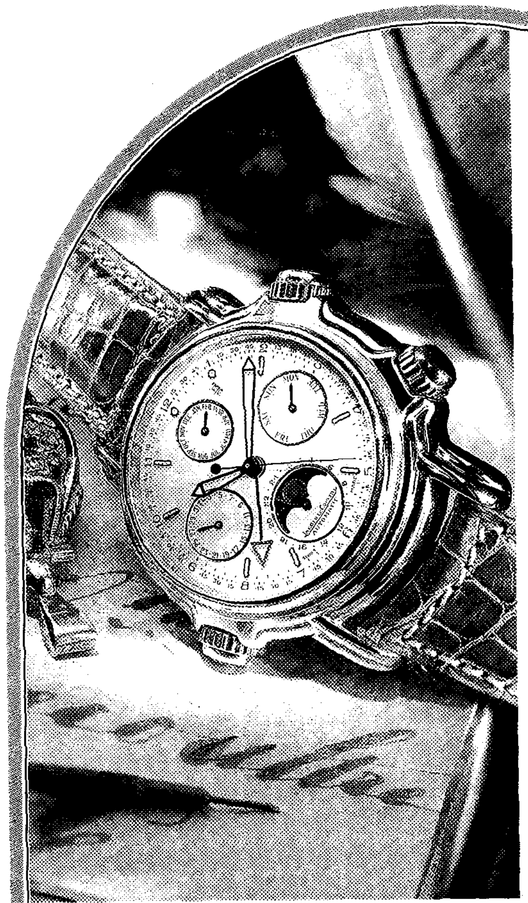
As for the danger that things will get out of hand, Centrum's Jaroslaw Kaczynski told me that, Walesa's populist rhetoric notwithstanding, it would be only through the kind of program Centrum was proposing that a violent populist explosion could be forestalled.

I asked him what he had in mind. For one thing, whom was he talking about?

He went through a long demographic exposition, sorting out different categories of culpability, and ended by saying, "We're speaking in practice about maybe two hundred thousand individuals. Some of them, of course, will still be usable: some are so good they're indispensable; others can be made useful again once they've broken free from their current arrangements. But the rest should be thrown out. The general point is that the *nomenklatura* as a social group must be dismantled; its members—not all of them but a high percentage—must undergo a process of social degradation. If we don't take those people's positions and companies now, through some sort of due process, others will come along later and take their heads. This is where we in Centrum and our opponents in ROAD have a fundamental disagreement."

And indeed they do. Michnik, for example, feels that any process of this sort, once started, would be unstoppable. "The struggle for freedom is beautiful," he recently wrote. "Anyone who has taken part in this struggle has felt, almost physically, how everything that is best and most precious within him was awakened. Revenge has a different psychology. Its logic is implacable. First, there is a purge of yesterday's adversaries, the partisans of the old regime. Then comes the purge of yesterday's fellow-oppositionists, who now oppose the idea of revenge. Finally, there is a purge of those who defend them. A psychology of vengeance and hatred develops. The mechanics of retaliation become unappeasable: witness the Jacobin terror and the Iranian revolution."

Michnik and other ROAD activists place the discussion about what to do with the *nomenklatura* in a broader context, one which, again, did define a real difference between the two main sides in the campaign, although here the distinction was more diffusely cultural than specifically political. Michnik is continually saying that what is at stake is whether Poland will move toward "Europe"—toward a set of values having to do with the kind of tolerance and democratic process he identifies with modern Europe—or will subside into a kind of



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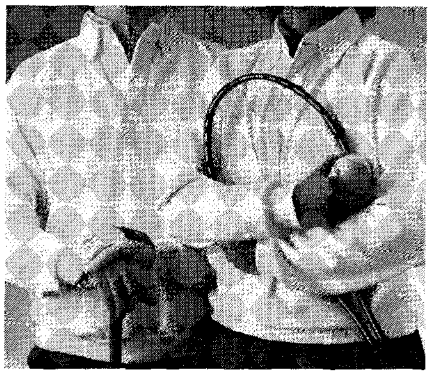

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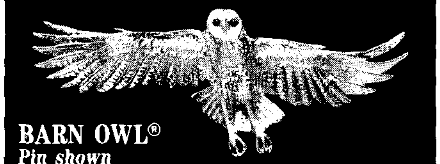

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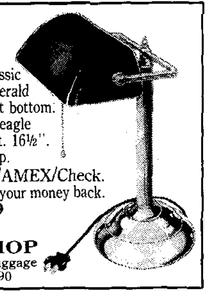

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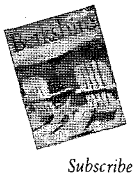

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barbarism. When Wladyslaw Frasyniuk was recently asked whether ROAD was going to be a party of the left or of the right, he replied, "Of the West." There were cynics who suggested that ROAD activists weren't so much "of the West" as "in the West," and it's true that over the past year many of the top activists associated with ROAD spent a lot of time going to conferences and colloquiums in Western Europe and the United States. This was, parenthetically, one of the reasons they didn't have time to go up and stroke Walesa. At any rate, one did encounter a certain resentment regarding this state of affairs: Centrum activists in general tended to be closer to the ground, with fewer cosmopolitan contacts, less likely to get invited abroad. (In general, ROAD activists had far, far better contacts among Western correspondents than their Centrum counterparts did—a factor that definitely skewed coverage of the recent campaign.) Independent of their resentments regarding travel opportunities, many associated with Centrum opposed ROAD's Eurofixation on its merits. "I don't know what this Europe is that Michnik keeps talking about," Jadwiga Staniszkis told me. "It's part of that parochial provincialism of the Eastern European intelligentsia, this romanticization of Europe. Adam can't imagine how cynical Europe is, how cold-eyed—how with Europeans it's all business, and you'd better meet them on that basis."

Even observers sympathetic to ROAD felt that its leaders made a mistake in overemphasizing the European theme—that they set themselves up for a response that became a key element of Centrum's campaign, one that might be subsumed under the rubric "Fine, you be Europe, we'll be Poland!"

"The thing you have to understand about Solidarity is that it achieved a blend of two sorts of oppositionists," Gebert told me. "On the one hand, there were the highly politicized activists—intellectuals, for the most part—who frankly didn't really care much about Polish nationalist traditions. Their opposition was rooted, rather, in conceptions about democracy and anti-totalitarianism. On the other hand, there were activists whose opposition grew out of various longtime Polish traditions, having to do primarily with the protection of indigenous national values in the face of repeated foreign occupations. And what's happened with Solidarity's triumph is that the second group has now turned on the first." The fervency of that Polish nationalist tradition stems from the hundred-and-twenty-five-year period when Poland as a nation ceased to exist—when, at the end of the eighteenth century, it was obliterated from the map of Europe after a series of partitions among Prussia, Russia, and Austria, and when Poles (those speaking the Polish language and identifying with Polish national values) therefore simply had to assert their Polishness in the face of foreign domination.

It's not always precisely clear what its proponents mean by "Polish" today, but it appears to have something to do with Catholicism. "It's not normal when a system of Christian values which so strongly influences our lives is not translated into the political structures that so strongly shape the system of power and political life," Kaczynski recently wrote. There is a rejection of secularism here—precisely the secularism that Michnik associates with "Europe"—but it doesn't necessarily imply subservience to the Catholic Church as an institution or blind adherence to its dogmas. Kaczynski, for example, managed to absent himself for the Senate's key vote on abortion, and Walesa's personal relations with Cardinal Glemp are known to be strained. In practice—in this campaign, at least—"Polish" came to mean something having to do with cultural hygiene. When Walesa out on the campaign trail repeatedly told voters they should vote for him because he's "a true Pole, the grandson and great-grandson of true Poles," everybody knew that what he was really talking about was the Jews.

"Walesa personally is not an anti-Semite," I was told by Gebert, who is Jewish—in fact, he is one of the few actively practicing young Jews [illegible] Poland today. "I'd still defend him from that charge, but mainly because he has *no* beliefs—certainly no beliefs as encompassing or systematic as anti-Semitism." He recalled for me the many times over the past decade when Walesa had behaved superbly when the regime sought to attack a supposed "Jewish" hegemony within the opposition. And it's probably useful to remember that history when trying to evaluate recent typical Walesa pronouncements. During the summer, for example, he was asked whether he thought the newly formed ROAD was "a Jewish party," and he replied, "I want to clear this up anew, so there will be no more anti-Semitic graffiti. Jews are great patriots and have done a lot for culture. But when they conceal their nationality they provoke attitudes of anti-Semitism. Why are Jews not proud of the fact that they are Jewish? I am proud of the fact that I am Polish." This was vintage Walesa—all over the map, forcefully condemning anti-Semitism while at the same time seeming to pander to it. The whole issue of "concealment" was a red herring; no one was concealing anything. (The comment occurred in the context of a widespread rumor campaign to the effect that Mazowiecki, long one of the foremost lay Catholic activists in the country, in fact came from a once-Jewish family, but even Church officials refuted this.) And the premise that one must be either Polish or Jewish—and if one is Jewish, somehow one cannot be Polish—was particularly gamy and disingenuous. "Walesa personally is not an anti-Semite," Gebert concluded, "but in the current campaign he has been *using* anti-Semitism, just as he has been using shallow populist rhetoric, as a way of gaining votes. And regardless of his personal beliefs, he holds responsibility for having legitimized anti-Semitism in Poland once again."

AT any rate, over the last two months Walesa's campaign swung into high gear. His rallies drew large crowds; his appearances were, as usual, both charismatic and outrageous. At one rally, he carried his disdain for concealment, his love of transparency, to such heights that he said he thought it would be a better idea if voters signed their ballots so he could know how everybody felt. One evening, Polish television broadcast a question-and-answer session he had held with workers at the television station's headquarters the previous day. One worker had commented that people in small towns all over Poland were wanting to accelerate the process of confrontation with the *nomenklatura*. "Precisely," Walesa replied. "And that's why I'll be engaging in such performances. For example, I will come here to you, to television. I'll tell you what I will do. First of all, I'll

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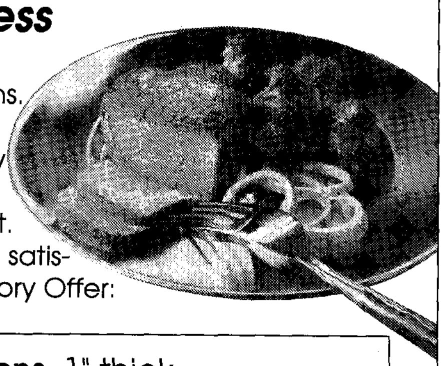

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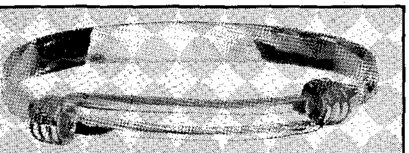

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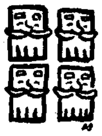
come to your offices here [and] I'll say: 'Shut all the gates and put a guard on them, and now no one's going to leave until we have things sorted out.' And then, immediately, 'Sir, about the *nomenklatura*, what are your grievances here? Speak, don't be afraid, the guards are in place, nothing will happen to you.' We are sorting things out, everything. . . . Late into the night, exhaustion, and then white smoke"—presumably a reference to the white smoke that signals the election of a new pope—"and we'll have reached an understanding. Television will carry it, and so forth, until I've generally got things sorted out with all the press. Then I'll be off to the state farms."

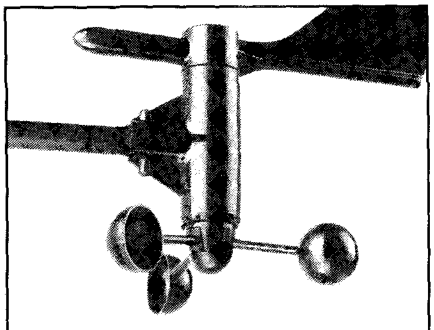


A few days later, at the Huta Warszawa steel mills, Walesa was asked why he didn't have a daily paper of his own, since the dailies in circulation were so often slandering him. (This was clearly a reference to *Gazeta*, the original Solidarity daily, which Michnik edits, and whose right to use the Solidarity logo Walesa recently revoked.) "Let them make those newspapers successful," he declared, "and then you [my supporters] will take them away!" (In a subsequent major editorial, entitled "Why I Will Not Vote for Lech Walesa," Michnik wrote of the way the Solidarity logo had gone from being a token of liberty to being a censor's imprimatur. "The idea of Solidarity has entered its final stage," he concluded bitterly. "For its death, I hold Lech Walesa responsible. I will remain a Solidarity man until the end of my days. But the logo that was with me for ten years I now lay beside my most personal mementos. . . . I wore this sign when it brought prison sentences; I do not want to wear it when it promises privilege. I sense this as a moment of trial: Now we will find out what each of us is worth—without a symbol.")

At other stops, Walesa alternately called for an acceleration in the process of privatization and promised that no factories—not even the unprofitable ones—would be closed down if such a policy threatened to result in mass layoffs. He promised every citizen in Poland a hundred million zlotys as recompense for their years of sacrifice. Later, he said the hundred million zlotys would only be a loan. On one campaign swing through southern Poland, at six out of eight rallies he referred to his pure Polish roots and how he "had the documents to prove it." Repeatedly he commented that in this regard, at any rate, he was "clean."

Ironically, though Prime Minister Mazowiecki might have been thought of as the candidate with all the advantages of incumbency, it was Centrum that overwhelmed its opposition in the organizational battle, drawing on the Solidarity networks all around the country. When it came to organization, ROAD, for its part, proved virtually hopeless. "An amoeba in a coma" is how Gebert (who himself had been working independently for the Mazowiecki campaign) described its team. (They held several of their first organizational meetings for the campaign in the Museum of the Earth, just off the hall of the dinosaurs.) They *were* able occasionally to take advantage of the fact of Mazowiecki's incumbency, though less for its organizational potential than for the capacity it offered to garner credit for government initiatives. The signing in Warsaw, just ten days before the election, of a treaty with Germany acknowledging Poland's western borders as permanent and inviolable, provided a sweet boost for Mazowiecki, and this was rendered all the sweeter by the German Foreign Minister's promise to lift visa requirements for Poles by the end of the year—a real coup. The arrest, a few weeks earlier, of two generals, former high Security Service officials, in the case of the murder of Jerzy Popieluszko, Solidarity's martyred priest, and then the arrest, a few days after that, of several other high military officials on charges of gross financial corruption, might, it could have been hoped, have dampened the *nomenklatura* issue somewhat. (Investigations in the latter case were continuing, and there was a chance that Jaruzelski himself could presently face obstruction-of-justice charges for failure to pursue a matter he clearly knew all about.)

But in the end the ROAD campaign was going to stand or fall on the strength of its candidate, Mazowiecki, a man who clearly seemed to wish that he didn't have to be Prime Minister, let alone President. The face he turned to the electorate was haggard beyond description. He looked utterly pained, completely exhausted. This was a man who, a year ago, was literally unable to complete his televised inaugural ad-



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dress to Parliament; he had to stop in mid-speech (people thought he was having a heart attack) and go outside to be examined by his doctors and to rest for half an hour. When he returned, he compared himself with the Polish economy: "But I have recovered, and I hope the economy will recover, too." He dawdled for weeks before announcing his candidacy for President, finally doing so on half an hour's notice, and without informing his aides. One person who saw the brief televised announcement—since nobody knew it was coming, hardly anybody was watching—said, "He wasn't looking into the camera, nor was he looking up at God, exactly; it was more like halfway in between, at the level of Jesus on the Cross." When he began going out on the road for rallies, he would occasionally open the floor to questions from the audience, and after each question he would take a while to collect his thoughts, then let out an agonized wheeze of a sigh—invariably panicking his aides, who once again thought he was having a heart attack—before going on to explain how incredibly difficult the situation was.

In many ways, Mazowiecki's campaign was thus of a piece with his entire tenure, and many blamed his style for the fact that Poles had never got to have a truly cathartic moment of transformational celebration: all year, everything had been *so solemn*. Gebert made an observation to that effect while discussing both Mazowiecki's style and his chances in the coming election. (This was mid-October.) "In the old days, anything outside the state system was helping the cause," Gebert said. "That made Solidarity strong and oh so heady. Those were the best years of our lives. But now the party's over, and what's emerging is a relatively complex society. There's no way we can still have all that headiness and at the same time operate in the practical world. It's like the morning after a big affair: we all feel robbed. And there are two ways of approaching the situation: Mazowiecki's, which is as if to say, 'Well, what did you expect? That's what sex is like.' And Walesa's, which is to smile slyly and say, 'Wrong girl?' Walesa tells us that it's just a matter of our having bedded the wrong girl, that we can still have our cake after eating it, we can have that wonderful feeling of being together, we don't have to make any hard choices; and that if it

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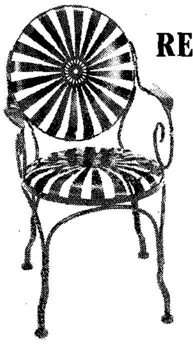

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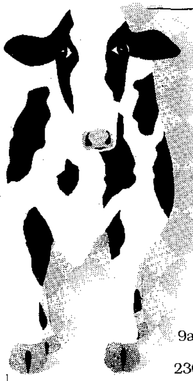

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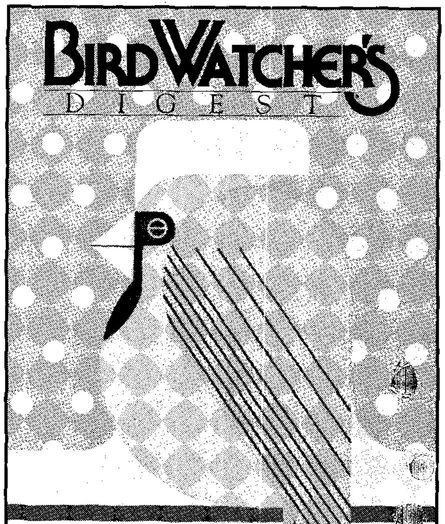
seems we do have to, it's because it's the wrong people who've been in charge, making all these mistakes. Most people in Poland need to hear that—because the way we feel now is: Is this *all* it was about? This incredible feeling of anticlimax? Sure, we can talk our heads off, but we've been doing that for a long time. And nothing else has changed. Of course, in reality all kinds of things have changed. But Mazowiecki doesn't help us to *feel* that, and it's a huge problem."

"It's all unpredictable," Halina Bortnowska, a senior ROAD strategist, explained to me one afternoon. "The society is suffering from what psychologists call ambivalence. People have a feeling that things are accelerating out of their control, yet at the same time nothing is changing: they have the same shop manager, the same people get the bigger salaries, the bus comes late, they can't go abroad—it used to be that they couldn't get a passport but now nobody will give them a visa. Everything has changed, and yet everything is the same. They want to hit out, and that desire plays to Walesa's advantage. But they're incredibly exhausted, they can't take any more shakeups, they need a little peace and quiet—and that plays to Mazowiecki's. He seems to respect people's wish for peace and quiet. Some appreciate him because he's so cultured. Others say that he's too soft—that we need someone as hard as the Communists to deal with Communists—and that plays to Walesa. At the same time, they feel that Walesa, in his hardness, is maybe beginning to resemble the Communists a little too much, and they don't like that. It goes round and round."

ROUND and round, and then things *really* got unpredictable. Nobody, at any rate, predicted the meteoric surge, during the final two weeks of the campaign, of Stanislaw Tyminski, one of the four lesser-known candidates who were simply supposed to be rounding out the field. It wasn't so much that he was lesser known: he was absolutely unknown. A forty-two-year-old expatriate businessman, he had left Poland twenty-one years ago to seek his fortune in Canada, and subsequently in Peru. (Every language he speaks, including Polish, he speaks haltingly, and with an accent.) And he had made a fortune, though it was by no means as grand as he sometimes pretended. (He



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described himself as one of the wealthiest men in Canada: actually, his computer firm in Toronto employs fewer than fifteen workers, and has gross sales of between five and ten million dollars a year; he also established a cable-television company in the Peruvian Amazon town of Iquitos.) That fortune was enough, however, for him to be able to pay petition canvassers a thousand zlotys per signature, which is how he managed, improbably, to secure the requisite hundred thousand endorsements on his candidacy filing petition. He had had no apparent prior involvement in Polish political affairs, even among the Polish expatriate community in Toronto, where reporters found that he was likewise virtually unheard of. (He does head Canada's thirty-five-hundred-member, ultraconservative Libertarian Party. "In Canada," he frequently told reporters, "I am known as an important party leader.")

Polish commentators initially described him as "the man from nowhere," and initially, at least, nowhere is where he staked his campaign. As if borrowing a page from Lyndon Johnson's 1948 Senate-race playbook, Tyminski marshalled a helicopter and hopped from hamlet to hamlet throughout rural Poland—certainly the most remarkable apparition to have descended on many of those remote communities in quite a while. He began drawing large crowds at industrial firms as well. Three weeks ago, when he first began showing up in the electoral polls, I asked Konstanty Gebert by telephone what he thought Tyminski's appeal was all about. "It's like you're talking to a child," Gebert hazarded, "and you ask him 'Whom do you love more, Mommy or Daddy?' And the kid naturally answers 'Uncle.' " Perhaps that was part of it—only this was no mere evasion. Tyminski was the archetypical Rich Uncle from America, and that was a key element in his self-presentation: he'd left, he'd made it, he knew *how* to make it, none of his amateur opponents even had a clue. If Poland were being run correctly, he told his ever-growing audiences, then everybody could make a profit and they'd all "attain the only kind of democracy which is a true democracy—the democracy of money." He promised that if he were elected people would begin to see financial benefits in their own households within a month. He was invariably short on specifics,

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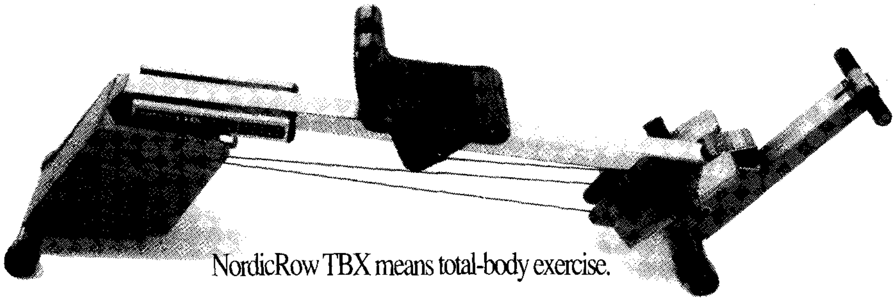

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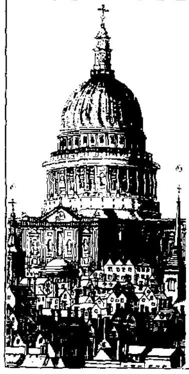

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but what did that matter? In his sleek Italian suits, with his young Peruvian wife by his side, he paraded his *know-how*. Beyond that, for many Poles it was no longer a question of discomfort at being forced to choose between two equally beloved parental figures. By late in this unusually nasty campaign, a lot of Poles had become utterly fed up with both the endlessly morose Mazowiecki and the extravagantly temperamental Walesa. Tyminski seemed a fresh alternative.

With a week to go before the election, Tyminski astonished the Polish body politic by accusing Mazowiecki of "high treason against the nation," claiming that he had the documents to prove it. The next morning, before a jammed press conference, he waved a sheaf of papers, which he characterized as a top-secret ministerial inventory of Polish companies soon to be sold to foreign interests, along with their scandalously undervalued anticipated sales prices. (The charge fit in with a wider theme of the Tyminski campaign: a fierce nationalism that characterized Poland's current situation as that of dire economic siege, with Western businesses intent on turning Poles into "the white slaves" of Europe.) Once reporters got a look at the papers, however—this was still during the press conference itself, large portions of which were broadcast over the evening's television news—it turned out that, far from being top secret, these pages had been widely circulated, and even published, three weeks earlier, as part of a provisional government report to Parliament on the ongoing process of privatization. Tyminski's alleged column of selling-price figures in fact constituted a list of the past year's "sales" figures for each of the inventoried firms; that is, their most recent annual gross incomes on sales. This appalling revelation —evidence either of outright deceit or of mind-boggling incompetence on Tyminski's part—brought the news conference to an almost farcical conclusion.

During the days that followed, Polish journalists published a steady barrage of further revelations about the mysterious candidate, each more damning than the last. It turned out that back in 1968, apparently, he had received a psychiatric deferment from the Polish Army. Weird stories emerged about his immersion in mystical rites among the Peruvian Indians. The coauthor of a book he wrote partly on this subject turned out to be the Polish Communist Party newspaper's former correspondent in Mexico City—a classic *nomenklatura* type if ever there was one. Tyminski turned out to be the only Presidential candidate who had attended the Soviet Embassy's recent celebration of the October Revolution. While he frequently implied that he had hardly ever visited Poland during the eighties, it turned out that in fact, according to border-control officials, he had done so seven times—each time travelling by way of Tripoli, Libya, of all peculiarly suspicious places. He was quoted as accusing his opponents of trying to hypnotize him: he knew all about hypnosis, he explained, so it hadn't worked. He was quoted as saying that Poland should have nuclear weapons, that it was a scandal that Poland was the only Second World War victor still not to have them. He was even caught providing the wrong maiden name for his own mother: "Lewandowska," he claimed (actually it was "Szymulska")—nobody could figure out why.

At any rate, by the eve of the election virtually all of the political commentators were once again writing Tyminski off: no candidacy could survive such a witheringly humiliating week. And then, the next day, November 25th, Tyminski trounced Mazowiecki at the polls, placing a commanding second (twenty-three per cent) to Walesa's frankly disappointing first (forty per cent). Mazowiecki managed to garner only eighteen per cent. Tyminski had run particularly well in the countryside, but he had even captured thirty-two per cent of the votes of industrial workers.

What had happened? In part, perhaps, what had happened was a sort of breakdown of the country's autoimmune system. In a healthy political context, the press exists in part to ward off sudden threats to a society's political equilibrium. But in Poland over the last several months Walesa and his confederates had spent so much of their campaign undermining social confidence in the nation's new democratic media (especially *Gazeta*, which likewise came under a pall for its supposed Jewish tendencies) that when those media began responding to Tyminski's challenge no one believed them—or, anyway, twenty-three per cent of the electorate declined to do so. This situation was compounded by a forty-year tradition, under the prior regime, of simply disbelieving the media out of hand, especially when they tended to show such unanimity in focussing their attacks. ("They framed him," a news vender told a friend of mine the morning after Tyminski's disastrous press conference. "They must have planted those documents on him.")

"This means we are not a society mature enough to accept democracy?" said a despairing Bronislaw Geremek, until recently the head of Solidarity's parliamentary caucus. There was perhaps that, but there was more as well. "We grossly underestimated how bad and how hopeless things have got for many people," Gebert commented to me by phone the next day. "This was in large part Poland's vote of no confidence in *itself*—people who only wish they hadn't had to be here the past twenty years voting for someone who'd had the good sense not to have been. Walesa has ruined whatever trust was left in Solidarity, and meanwhile Mazowiecki, it turns out, has grossly overstepped the limits of people's endurance. People are suffering. Inflation is again up—close to six per cent for October—and people are wondering, For what have we gone through all this agony? At least, inflation was supposed to stop. They experience new constraints on their freedom: to see goods in shops which they are unable to buy, for example, turns out to be horrible for people who were used to the opposite situation. You might remember how, back in 1980, one of the Twenty-one Demands was for an end to those hard-currency PEWEX stores—their ostentatious display of wealth amid everybody else's poverty. Only now, every store is like a PEWEX shop, and it makes people crazy. In fact, generally, the flaunting of goods is rending society: it used to be that the *nomenklatura* were at least discreet in their prosperity. Now the new millionaires spin around town in their flashy new Hondas, past the old ladies with their scrawny wedges of cheese. I think it's significant that Tyminski scored particularly well among young voters, twenty-five and under—kids too young to remember Solidarity but old enough to know what a future devoid of hope looks like. Tyminski was hawking hope. Of course, it was all magic, in the same way that Walesa's campaign was largely magic—only more purely so. One of the ironies of the coming weeks is that Tyminski will be doing to Walesa what Walesa was doing to Mazowiecki. It will be interesting to see how Walesa responds."

In the end, as incoherent as were many of Tyminski's harangues and as vacuous as were most of his prescriptions, the outcome of the vote was neither incoherent nor vacuous. Although the campaign failed to offer voters a meaningful set of economic alternatives, it did turn into a straight up-or-down referendum on the effects of the shock transition to date. Only Mazowiecki's supporters (eighteen per cent of the electorate) could be seen as actively supporting Balcerowicz's program. People who voted for Tyminski obviously completely rejected it (though what he or they were proposing in its stead was almost a complete mystery). As for the forty per cent who voted for Walesa, it's likely that many, if not most, were drawn to the it-doesn't-have-to-hurt-this-much side of his contradictory message rather than its we-should-be-going-even-faster counterpart. Walesa himself may have been leaning toward an eventual Balcerowicz Prime Ministership (and, if he is elected, he may still want to try one), but this is not what a lot of people who voted for him imagined themselves to be voting for. A vast plurality of Poles, if not an outright majority, either don't understand the shock program or else understand its implications all too well (at least as they imagine those implications impinging on their own lives) and reject them out of hand. And to the extent that Tyminski can sharpen these contradictions—that is, get people to see him as the candidate opposing the shock treatment and Walesa as a candidate still wedded to its precepts—he may well be able to run quite a strong final campaign.

In the meantime, everybody in Poland is still largely in a state of shock. Initially, Walesa responded to the election results by saying he was considering pulling out of this travesty of a race altogether but, of course, and not for the first time, he changed his mind. The day after the election, Mazowiecki went on television to announce his own resignation and that of his entire Cabi-

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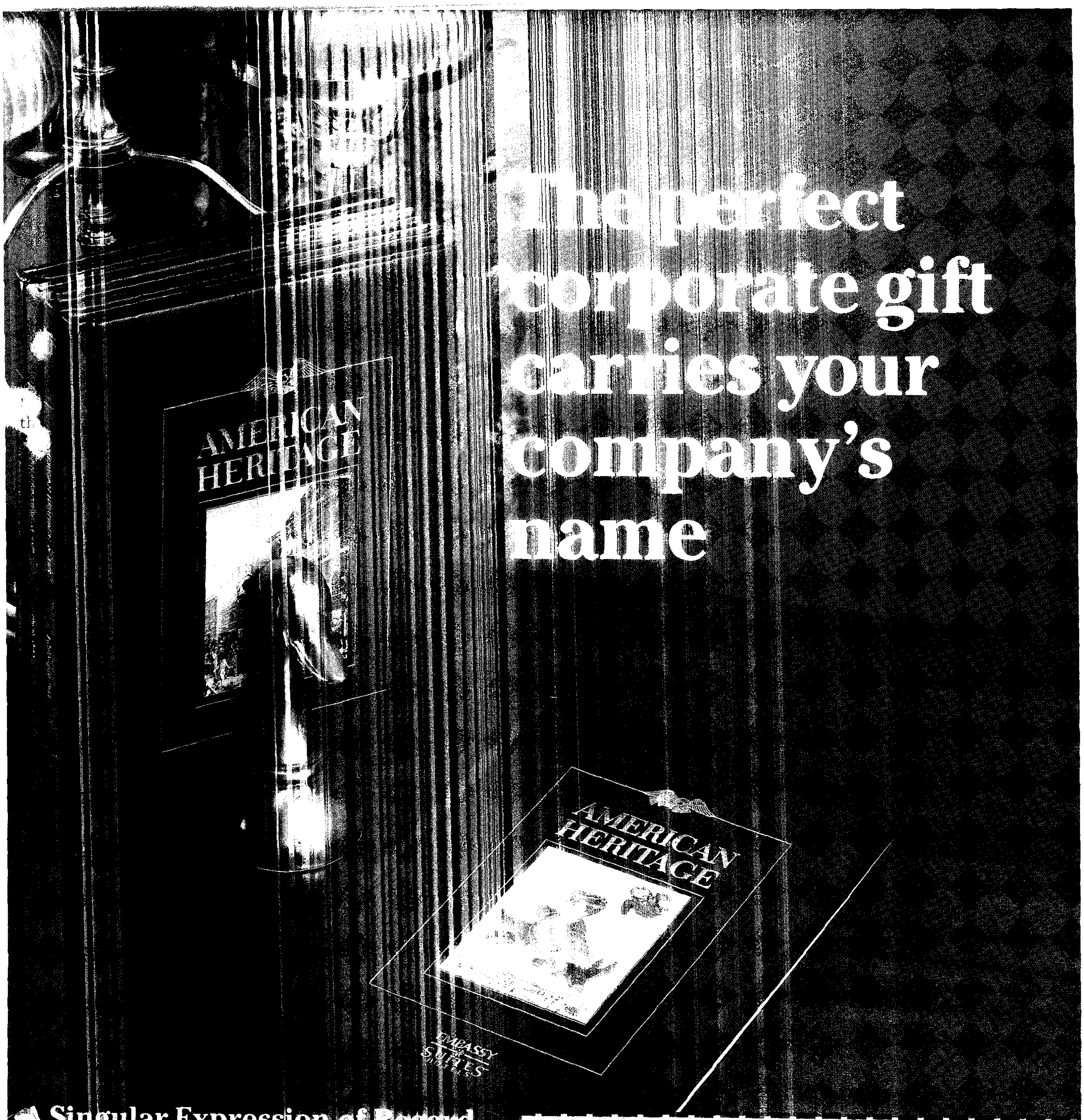
net, pending the appointment of a new Prime Minister by the new President. For the next several weeks (the runoff is scheduled for December 9th), Poland would be entering a period of tense waiting. In the short term, the two shattered wings of Solidarity endeavored to reunite, many of Mazowiecki's partisans lining up, however reluctantly and dispiritedly, behind Walesa. ("I'm horrified at the prospect of Walesa getting eighty per cent of the vote," Gebert told me. "But even more horrified at the prospect of his only getting sixty to Tyminski's forty. And, of course, Tyminski's winning would be the greatest horror of all.") The Tuesday after the election, *Gazeta* ran a front-page editorial by Michnik. "We don't withdraw any of our criticisms against Lech Walesa," Michnik wrote. "We still think his policy of 'war at the top' broke up Solidarity, disoriented public opinion, and brought about a disaster. But he is the only candidate today who can be taken seriously. A Walesa victory will put the country at risk, but Tyminski's victory would guarantee our degradation." Pointedly, at least at that stage, Michnik still couldn't bring himself to urge Mazowiecki's supporters to actually go out and vote for Walesa. (Walesa, meanwhile, was reported to have telephoned Mazowiecki at midweek seeking his support and even suggesting he might retain him as Prime Minister. Mazowiecki, understandably taken aback, conditioned his response on Walesa's publicly retracting both his denunciations of the current government and some of his promises regarding any future one. Walesa replied that he didn't need to retract anything, since all his denunciations had been accurate and his promises were all eminently fulfillable. He then asked Mazowiecki why they couldn't just go back to the good old days. The conversation ended, with Mazowiecki in something of a quandary.) A debate between Tyminski and Walesa was scheduled to be televised live on Sunday, December 2nd.

Even assuming an eventual Walesa victory, many frankly worry about the intermediate term, in which a victorious Walesa might well turn on his onetime allies (despite whatever momentary repentance they just displayed), purging places like *Gazeta* with even more relish than he will the bastions of the old *nomenklatura*. Others took a view I'd first heard articulated back in October by an unusual Solidarity activist in Lodz, unusual in that he was not supporting Walesa. "If he's elected, I'm leaving," he said, showing me his passport with a Benelux visa already stamped in. "He has made too many promises to too many people, and after he's elected, and he fails to deliver, people are really going to be furious. They won't be able to go after him, so they'll be going after the low-hanging fruit. That's why I'll be long gone."

Many now worry that, even if Walesa wins, the entire economic program will soon be coming to a halt—that Walesa will institute "Eastern Europe's first Peronist regime," as Michnik has phrased it. They worry that international supporters and investors will recoil in horror. But there are others who foresee none of these nightmares. They see Walesa as, if anything, more of a Carlos Saúl Menem figure—somebody who will be able to make all sorts of bold moves on the economic and privatization fronts, somebody still uniquely positioned to do so. (Of course, Menem, for all his boldness, is not doing so well himself in Argentina.) They see him as a spectacular ambassador to the world: witness his American triumphs. And, above all, they see him as someone who, for all his outrageousness, has always behaved, in the final analysis, with temperance and wisdom.

A final irony of the current situation is that nobody even knows what powers will eventually inhere in the office of the Polish Presidency—this hasn't yet been decided. Not that anyone is sure Walesa would confine himself to whatever powers were assigned in any future constitution. Beyond that, nobody really knows how the next round of parliamentary elections, scheduled for early in the new year, will play themselves out.

For the time being, as I say, it's largely fish soup. Or, as Professor Lawrence Freedman, of King's College, London, recently phrased it, Poland, like much of Eastern Europe, may now be entering "the tunnel at the end of the light." Or, as the great Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci phrased it sixty years ago (though, obviously, in a precisely opposite context), "The old is dying and yet the new cannot be born. In this interregnum, a variety of morbid symptoms appear." —LAWRENCE WESCHLER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THE THEATRE

Sweet Revenge?

MUCH of the fun of Michael Weller's "Lake No Bottom" takes place among the three actors on the stage at Second Stage, but some of it does manage to breach the footlights. The actors are Marsha Mason, Robert Knepper, and Daniel Davis, and they perform with a relish that may seem at times unwarranted by the script but is sporadically infectious all the same. Mr. Davis is a well-known critic now in semi-retirement—he is unemployed but eager to write a book of his own—and Miss Mason is his charming wife; Mr. Knepper, once her lover, is a novelist who has recently published a best-seller. The action is set in various rooms of the critic's large country house, on the bank of his private lake, and on the acres of his private woods—all this indicating a prosperity unknown to most of us in the profession. The novelist, a close friend and former student of the critic, has come for a day's visit but agrees, somewhat reluctantly, to spend the night, and becomes the confidant of both host and hostess. The critic tells him that the marriage is growing cold, and begs him to help restore it; the wife seems determined to renew the affair. Unseen characters assume a kind of importance: gypsies camping across the lake; a contessa who has been until recently the mistress of the novelist; and an obnoxious colleague of the critic's named Shumkin.

Without giving too much of this larky, if frail, plot away, I can reveal that the suspicion soon arises that the novelist may be as much dupe as confidant. How much of what he is told is true, how much playacting? Did the lost child whose mention brings the wife to tears really exist? Is the critic's burst of jealous rage the real thing or suspect? The play grows livelier as it progresses, and near the end the two men, pistols in hand, dart among the trees firing shots at each other as the wife shouts offstage warnings. (There is a considerate mention in the program that shots will be fired.) No lethal results. Whatever Mr. Weller's opinion of critics may be, it is the critic and his wife whose batteries are recharged at the final curtain, while the novelist stands slightly wounded and thoroughly bushed.

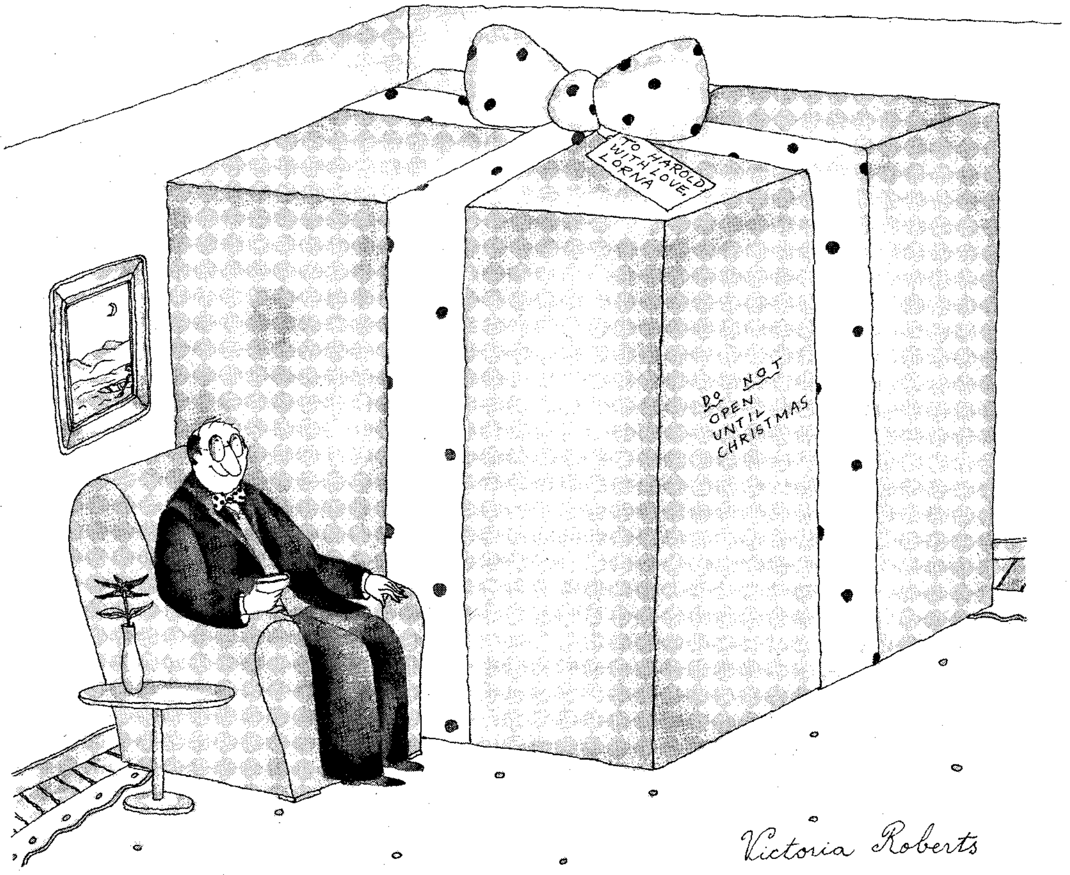
As for the production, "curtain" is the key word; there are three curtains here, in fact, and they slide back and forth across the stage as scene follows scene. Carole Rothman directed—*skillfully, as usual—and the acting* is admirable. Miss Mason is a star in a star's role. The stylish, effective settings were designed by Adrianne Lobel and lighted by Kevin Rigdon; the costumes were designed by Jess Goldstein.

—EDITH OLIVER

Overcast

ANYONE who needs to be convinced that yesterday's cutting-edge social commentary turns up as today's after-school special should hurry along to the Kaufman Theatre, where the "brat pack" actors Jon Cryer, Judd Nelson, and Justine Bateman are appearing in what amounts to a vanity production of the Jules Feiffer play from which Mike Nichols fashioned the 1971 film "Carnal Knowledge." The Kaufman has come to specialize in such showcase productions. It's the sort of place where the limited-run engagement of a well-known chanteuse predicates her appearance in an upcoming musical, or where, if you look in your program to see why the costumes are anachronistic, you find it's because they were put together by the director's daughter.

The director in the present instance is Martin Charnin, the composer-lyricist. The daughter in question, Sasha Charnin Morrison (she's a former model/casting editor at *Mirabella* and is now the accessories editor at *Seventeen*), has come up with outfits that are, for the most part, inappropriate to the late nineteen-forties, when the first half of "Carnal Knowledge"—the only half I saw—takes place. But historical accuracy did not seem to be a primary


TO HAROLD WITH LOVE, LORNA
DO NOT OPEN UNTIL CHRISTMAS
Victoria Roberts

Suspense

concern of the teen-agers who made up most of the audience at the performance I attended. These young people—girls, mostly, wearing sweatshirts from Duke and Binghamton—were empathetically absorbed in the question of whether Susan (Miss Bateman), the Smithie, would get "felt up" by the two Amherst buddies, Sandy (Mr. Cryer) and Jonathan (Mr. Nelson), and laughing with genuine nervous excitement about Susan's dilemma over whether or not to "put out," and when and with whom; but their main purpose in coming seemed to be to gaze on the (to them) well-known features of Mr. Nelson, who has been seen in such brat-pack movies as "The Breakfast Club" and "St. Elmo's Fire." It's a lucky thing, then, that Ken Billington's rather effortfully arty and severe lighting almost never takes Mr. Nelson out of the hot spot—not even in a scene between Susan and Sandy in which Jonathan is supposed to be offstage somewhere, reading.

Of course, the cinematography in the movie version of "Carnal Knowledge" had a similar tendency to focus weirdly on something other than what was really going on in the scene. By keeping the camera trained on the wrong thing in certain scenes (or on the right thing seen from an unconventional angle), Nichols wasn't controlling our viewpoint so much as trying to control the way we see ourselves, which has always been his forte. But even if Mr. Charnin had anything to say (he hasn't, and Feiffer's script, divorced from Nichols' vision, is nothing but a series of trivial sketches) he wouldn't be any better off, as he doesn't have a camera to say it with; neither does he have Jack Nicholson and Candice Bergen. Mr. Nelson appears not to understand what sex meant in a world in which talking about and doing "it" was a big deal, just as Miss Bateman, who is best known for her work on the prime-time television series "Family Ties," doesn't understand how to play a character rather than a situation. And suffice it to say that Mr. Charnin is not the man to teach them these things.

"GROTESQUE LOVESONGS," at the WPA, was a sweet, old-fashioned romantic comedy, by Don Nigro, that got a lot better than it deserved. Or, rather, it did and it didn't. From Kyle Renick, who runs the theatre, it got an ace cast and director (Kenneth Elliott) and one of those beautiful little multilevel sets that Edward T. Gianfrancesco always designs for the WPA (they cheer you up the moment you walk into the auditorium), this one dominated by a luscious (perhaps too luscious) greenhouse. "Grotesque Lovesongs" was less well served by fate, however: not only did the production suffer a major setback—the firing of the star, Sally Kirkland—just days before it was set to open (Miss Kirkland had stopped a performance in mid-scene) but this setback got overshadowed by the scenery's falling on the star of "Shogun," an event that occurred that same week. Suzanne Collins, who replaced Miss Kirkland, wasn't quite ready for review the first time I went to see "Grotesque Lovesongs," though she gave a fine performance several days later. In any case, the play closed after two weeks, which was probably just as well.

"Grotesque Lovesongs"—about a family thrown into confusion when one of two highly dissimilar brothers is left a fortune by a man who used to be friendly with their mother—wasn't necessarily the sort of play you would send anyone to see: predictable as clockwork and full of characters who spoke with an arch and studied cleverness, it disappeared from the mind and memory before you had decided where to go for dinner. But while you were watching it the play seemed charming—mostly because the supporting players were so charming. Chad Lowe and Ted Marcoux, as the two brothers; Felicity Huffman, as the girl they were vying for; and Stephen Mendillo, as the laconic father, all gave such beautifully modulated performances—performances that blended well under Mr. Elliott's skilled direction—that in the end the play took on the aspect of the queer little Robert Hunteresque songs that Mr. Nigro had written for Mr. Lowe to sing between scenes, from which the play took its title. It's worth noting, for the record, that it was nice to see these actors, and that it would be a treat to see them again.

—MIMI KRAMER

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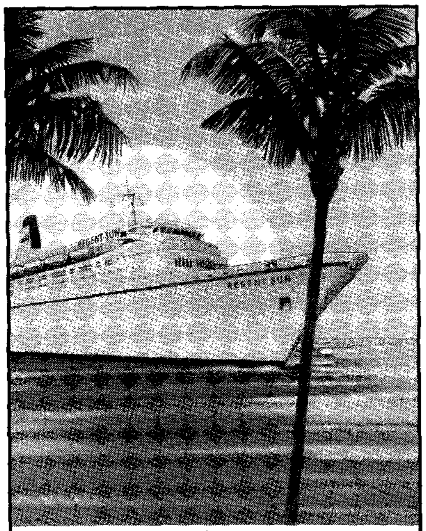

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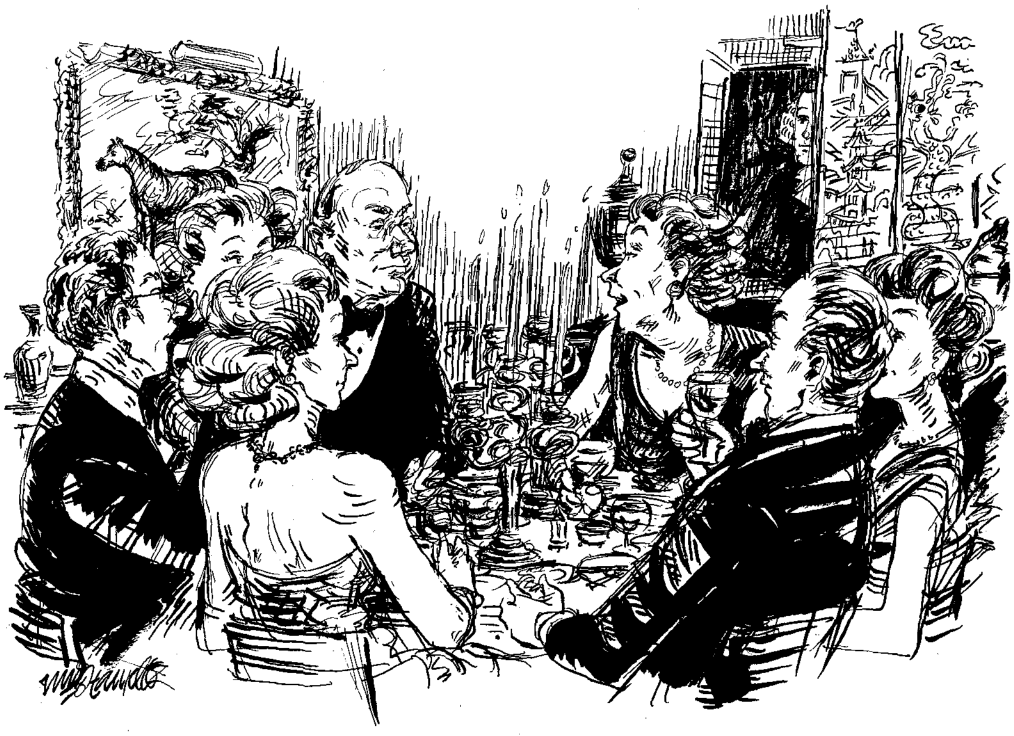
WHETHER or not eighty per cent of life consists of just showing up, as Woody Allen once said, surely quite a bit of the rest of it consists of trying to adjust to whatever changes have taken place since one was last on the premises. This year, at the American International Toy Fair—the world's largest annual gathering of toy buyers and sellers, which is held in this city each February—there was heated discussion of the problems facing the makers of war toys, in view of the new era of international good feeling, peace breaking out all over, and similar (from one point of view) untoward developments. Anyhow, it was agreed, they marked the end of a toy-business era when a cartoon in the *Post* could show Santa Claus on his department-store throne under siege from squadrons of little kids heavily armed with toy guns, and one of the kids (*not* in the Christmas spirit) telling Santa, "Rambo sent us. Don't make a move, Red Scum!" In fact, the Rambo doll had only a brief run on the toy counters a few years back, and at this year's toy fair particular attention—accompanied by condolences, sometimes of the crocodile variety—was paid to what all the new international amity would mean to the G.I. Joe dolls, the four-inch plastic soldiers whose manufacturer, the Hasbro company, has sold a hundred million of them over the years. Until a couple of years ago, G.I. Joes, which, in deference to the sensibilities of their little-boy admirers, are described not as dolls but as "action figures," were regularly at or near the top of the charts—that is, the toy-best-seller lists published monthly by the trade publications *Toy & Hobby World* and *Playthings*. G.I. Joe and the eleven-and-a-half-inch Barbie doll are, as you may know, the golden oldies of the baby boomers, the demographic group whose members, as parents, are now the toy industry's prime customers. In the past, Joe and Barbie often alternated between first and second place on the lists. By no coincidence, it seemed, Hasbro and Mattel, which manufactures Barbie, are, respectively, the world's largest and second-largest toy companies. By the time of this year's toy fair, however, Joe was plunging downward on the charts; by late last summer, sales of the toy soldier had put him in twentieth—that is, last—place. While he moved toward the lower depths, the sales of Barbie and Barbie accessories—they account for half of Mattel's revenues, which were a billion two hundred million dollars last year—were more robust than ever. One jocular explanation is that this demonstrates the attractions of the older woman: Barbie just celebrated her thirty-first birthday. Another theory at the toy fair—unkindly spread, some assumed, by toymakers who over the years had gone to vast expense in unsuccessful efforts to knock Barbie off her queenly commercial perch—was that, whatever condition the world was in, generally speaking, warlike or peaceable, bimbos would always be in demand. Barbie is said to have been brought to Mattel by a toy buyer who—luckily for Mattel—encountered her as a favor in a Berlin bordello. To be fair about it, this doll seems to be a reformed sort. You'll find her all over town wearing various outfits. In a relatively demure evening dress and labelled "My First Barbie," she's $12.29 at the two Toy Park stores, 115 East 86th Street and 626 Columbus Avenue (90th). Not so demure, Wet 'n Wild Barbie, wearing a skimpy swimsuit that changes color when it's immersed in ice water (it changes back when things warm up), is $9.99 at Woolworth, which also has Barbie's Western Fun Motor Home. This is a bright-pink travelling van, twenty-four inches long, equipped with a kitchen, a beauty-and-makeup center, and a bed. The living area can be detached, freeing up a four-wheel-drive-type vehicle for Barbie and her friends to race about in. The price is $59.[illegible]. According to the rules, you're not supposed to ask where Barbie got the money for such elaborate accommodations. Another doll that some of the baby-boomer mothers may have played with many years ago, and one that you don't have to bite back awkward questions about, is named Ginny. It seems safe to say that she has never been described as Wet 'n Wild Ginny. A dainty little-girl sort, eight inches tall, with combable hair,

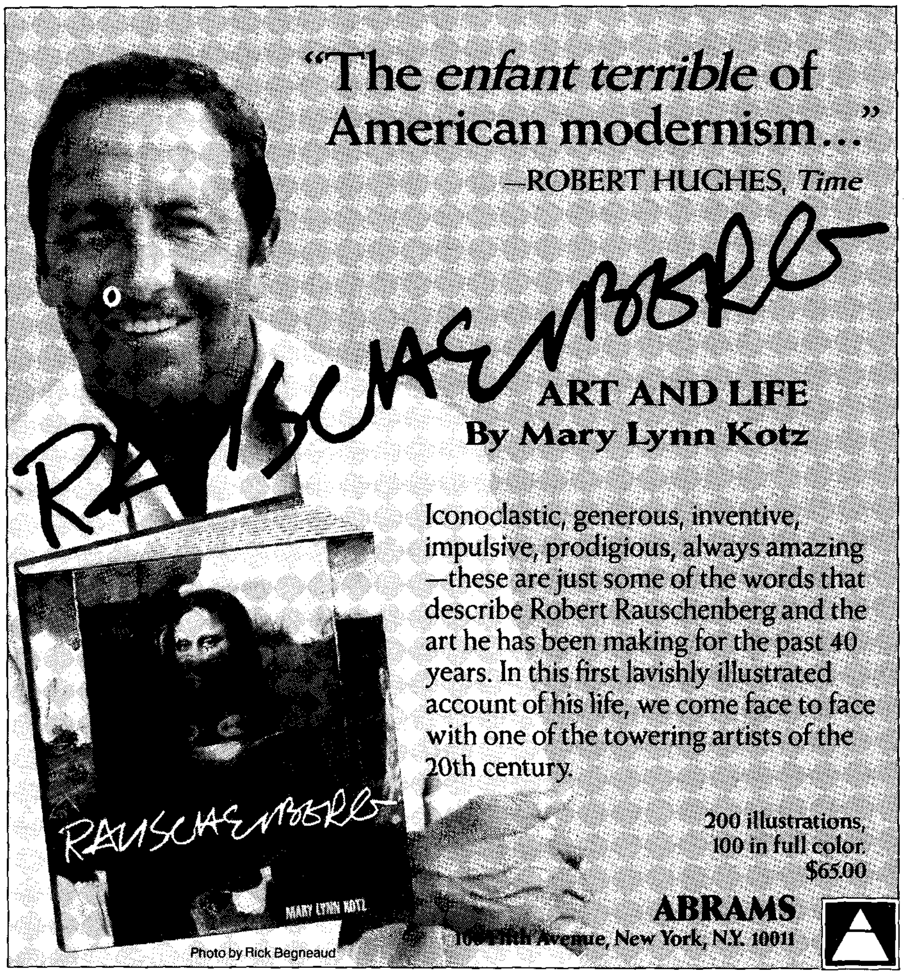


"I'm sure you remember, Eddie, when community service was something only nice people did."

and wearing pale-pink chemise-style underclothes and Mary Jane-style shoes, she costs $17 at the Penny Whistle stores, of which there are now four in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

THOSE in attendance at the 1990 toy fair who kept speculating about the fate of G.I. Joe in a world of rampant détente may have done so in some cases because they remembered what had happened to him in the early nineteen-seventies. First put on the market in 1964, he flourished there until opposition to the Vietnam War made khaki unfashionable for toy action figures. Then, for a few years, Hasbro had him reincarnated as G.I. Joe Adventurer, who had ostensibly moved into less controversial civilian life, going on safaris and archeological digs and the like. However, some sharp-eyed observers noticed that the adventurers were still wearing their plastic dog tags. So what were these fellows really up to? (C.I.A.? Special Branch?) In 1975, Hasbro settled the question by decommissioning them entirely from the toy counters. It wasn't until December, 1981, that things began looking up again. A full-page ad appeared in *Toy & Hobby World* saying, in large letters, "G.I. JOE: THE BEST IS BACK!" The ad's lighting was shadowy, even ominous, and Joe was shown standing somewhat in silhouette—a dark, helmeted figure, rifle in hand, at the ready. Renamed G.I. Joe, A Real American Hero, he was a big seller once again, until the threat of the Evil Empire faded, spoiling everything.

Then, last August, just as it seemed that it was taps, commercially speaking, for Joe (or, at best, safari time again), there came Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and all the events that have so precipitately followed. It could be that the best will be back in full force for the next toy season: his sales are said to be picking up again. Of course, the Joes you buy to go under someone's tree this month will not be fitted out for Desert Shield duty. Retooling takes a while. You can hardly expect a toy company to outfit many thousands of four-inch plastic soldiers as fast as the Pentagon managed matters for four hundred thousand of the real thing. These G.I. Joes are not, by the way, individually a major investment; they're about $4 all over town. Still, it takes a fair number of them to



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RAUSCHENBERG
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By Mary Lynn Kotz

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simulate an army, and one also has to provide enemies for them to fight. Until recent developments, G.I. Joe had been fighting a group called the COBRA. Its members have such names as Laser Viper, Range Viper, Rock Viper. There may be a lot more playing fun next year, when, possibly, the bad guys will have a non-make-believe affiliation. We can imagine them: scores of tiny Iraqi soldiers, each with Saddam Hussein's face—Saddam Viper, perhaps. Some of the anti-COBRA equipment might be usable in a toy-department reflection of the real Gulf if there should be a war there. A twenty-seven-inch fighter plane called Sky Raven has a lowering cockpit, retractable landing gear, an elevating gun with windscreen, and so on. Toys R Us has this for $30. We don't have to ask where G.I. Joe got the money for his equipment, do we? From the peace dividend.

One games manufacturer *was* able to move in fast when opportunity knocked late last summer. Victory Games, whose headquarters are in Baltimore, had been prepared for trouble in the Persian Gulf since 1983, when it brought out its Gulf Strike game. The Victory company's games are highly cerebral; they would probably be wasted on any child under twelve or so. The boards on which they are played are large, detailed maps. Tactics, strategy, and real choices for a player are involved. The outcome of a game called Stalingrad, for example, may be different—for that afternoon—from the outcome in the history books. All that the Victory people had to do last August was to fit out their Gulf Strike game with what they call a "Desert Shield module," which can be played on the same board. Two hundred of the games have already been donated to the American troops in Saudi Arabia. As the company explains, they will enable the troops to answer questions like "When will the U.S. have enough force to throw Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait?" A Victory press release notes that "decapitation strikes aimed at Saddam Hussein himself" are "among the many game options" offered in the Desert Shield module. The Gulf Strike/Desert Shield game is about $40 at Barnes & Noble.

THE reason so many people in the toy business are down in the dumps this year has to do less with the issue of whether there will be a war than with the economy. Hasbro has said on occasion that the reason G.I. Joe was taken off the market in the seventies was not anti-war sentiment but the oil shortage. As you know—and, if you don't, some fifth grader of your acquaintance will remind you—plastic is a product of oil, and if developments in the Persian Gulf should lead to a severe cutback of oil deliveries large areas of toy departments could be decommissioned overnight. Except for references to Barbie and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles phenomenon, of which you have surely heard, and—an especially nice surprise—sales of children's books, which have doubled in the last five years, the most prevalent words in headlines about the toy industry now seem to be "decline" and "fall." (But then why should they be different?) Some years ago, it seemed that nearly every other board game had to do with getting rich on Wall Street or in big business. Now those games aren't easy to find—even the ones that, reflecting other headlines, include a large supply of Go to Jail cards. Of course, things aren't so bad that you'll feel it's necessary to begin passing around collections of "Little Orphan Annie in the Great Depression" comic strips, but if you want to keep this option in mind Dover Publications, 180 Varick Street (Charlton), 9th floor, has such a collection available, for $3.95—two hundred and thirty-one pages dating back to 1931 and chronicling the collapse of Daddy Warbucks' financial empire and how he and Annie then scrounged for life's necessities in the big city. If you have some young entrepreneurial types on your Christmas list, maybe it would be a good idea to suggest that they start small. Childcraft (20 Kilmer Road, P.O. Box 3143, Edison, New Jersey 08818-3143; telephone 800 631-5657) has, for $29.95, a My First Business set, which comes with markers, giant plastic paper clips, a date stamp, a telephone-message pad, a desk organizer, stationery, a money kit, postal forms, and various useful signs such as "WILL RETURN" (clock indicator included) and—the one we expect will be used most—"PRIVATE."

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Since the word "down" is now in style everywhere, in and out of the toy departments, it's not surprising that the baby dolls you may encounter seem to be a bit emotional this season—tearful, and all. We even found one that breaks out in cold chills. It's all right, though—she does this only when she's stripped to the buff. Put her doll's clothes back on or give her a hug, and she's happy again. Her name is Newborn Baby Shivers, she's seventeen inches tall, and she costs $50 at Macy's, not including the cost of one C battery, which activates the electronic chip that sets off the shivers. One long-ago Christmas, the big attraction in the toy departments was the dolls named Tiny Tears, Sweet Tears, Sugar Tears, Tearie Dearie, and *Teeny Weeny* Tiny Tears, who were crying all over the doll counters. Ultimately, most of them vanished from the doll lists, having, for all we know, drowned in their own tears—the fate that, if you remember, almost befell Alice after she went down the rabbit hole. There are crybabies this year, but they seem to be open to negotiation. For instance, Hush Little Baby, twenty inches long, cries constantly (no tears, though) until someone puts a bottle or a pacifier in her mouth, and then she actually seems to suck away at it. She has a brown face and brown curly hair, or else a white face and straight blond hair, wears pink rompers, and costs $59.99 (not including the four C batteries required to operate her) at the Kiddie City stores, of which there are three in Manhattan. We did find some plush animals that shed tears (after they're fed water out of a bottle). They're called Lost 'n Founds, and their eyes look very, very sad, but we can't say whether it's the economy or the international crisis that is on their minds. With a bottle and, fortunately, a bib, they're $24.99 at Toys R Us. The Lost 'n Found animals are a bunny, a kitten, a lion, a panda, a koala, a lamb, a chimp, and a puppy dog.

We didn't find any sad-eyed plush versions of Millie, the First Dog, however. What would she have to cry about? On the *Times* best-seller list—we're talking books now—"Millie's Book," the springer spaniel's memoirs of her life in the White House, is in third place, five notches above "An American Life," Ronald Reagan's memoirs of *his* days in the White House. In fairness to Mr. Reagan, by the way, it should be pointed out that it was not G.I. Joe he designated A Real American Hero. It was, of course, Oliver North. You remember that a small California toymaker who in 1987 announced that he was taking orders for an Oliver North doll got almost no orders. An enterprising sort, he then twisted the heads off the unsold Ollies and replaced them with heads of Gorbachev, birthmark and all. They didn't sell, either. A set of *matryoshka* dolls—those figures which fit one inside another—representing, not entirely respectfully, five Soviet leaders, from Lenin to Gorbachev, has been spotted in Moscow and among the wares of a street vender on the Lower East Side but so far has not made it to, say, F. A. O. Schwarz. We haven't come upon a Ronald Reagan doll, either, but Dover Publications has a Nancy Reagan paper doll; she's made of cardboard and has thirty-one glitzy paper outfits by Adolpho, Galanos, and such, for $3.95. From the same place, and for the same price, you can get a book of paper dolls featuring George and Barbara Bush and twenty-four outfits that they wore during the 1988 campaign and at the Inauguration and during the early months of their White House sojourn, and also paper-doll versions of ten of the Bush grandchildren. No paper-doll Willie Horton, but at the Toy Park you'll find a Read My Lips game, for $19.99. This is one of those act-out charade games, except that the players mouth the clues, and so one's teammates are required to lip-read. The manufacturer, the Pressman Toy Corporation, announced late last spring that for every game purchased between June 25th and July 4th it would donate one dollar toward reducing the federal deficit. This easing of America's debt burden, Pressman said, would help President Bush keep his "Read My Lips" promise of no new taxes. (Economically speaking, there appeared to be some confusion there.) Arrangements had been made to have the proceeds (they amounted to about five thousand dollars) presented personally to the President, along with a Read My Lips game, but after he revised his campaign vow the ceremony was cancelled.

Getting back to those low-in-spirits baby dolls we mentioned, there's one who isn't smiling even though she has a lot to smile about: the Cabbage Patch Kid. The sixteen-inch, soft-bodied doll with the pursed lips and slightly crossed eyes has been given a more benign expression than she had when she first arrived on the toy scene, but you could hardly call it a smile. It was in late 1983 that the Kids burst on the market and achieved their sudden, stunning success. The dolls are given credit for having, all by themselves, revived the baby-doll market, which had been laid waste by Barbie and her fashion-doll friends. Trivial Pursuit is given credit for having, all by itself, also beginning in 1983, revived the board-game market, which was deep in the doldrums because of video games. The questions in the newest Trivial Pursuit game deal with the nineteen-sixties—just right for the older baby boomers. Barnes & Noble has this for $34.95. As for the Kids, after sales dropped off and the company that manufactured them fell into the toils of Chapter 11, Hasbro took them over, but Cabbage Patchers began to be referred to in the past tense. As it turns out, their demise was greatly overstated. The Kids are now tenth on the *Playthings* chart—the only dolls besides Barbie on the list—and will bring in about a hundred million dollars this year. They come in various modes—Poseable Kids, Toddler Kids, Designer Line Kids, Birthday Kids. A Birthday Kid (this one blows on a party favor) is $50 at Macy's. Each Kid still comes with its own name and birth certificate. One we encountered was called Blanche Wilhelmina, which suggested a certain desperation on the part of members of the doll-christening department, who have so far had to come up with different two-part names for sixty-five million Kids.

CHRISTMAS is about generations—about the grandmother trudging through the toy aisles pretending she isn't really on the lookout for a Shirley Temple doll (which she knows perfectly well she will not find), or an uncle, perhaps, working the same territory and wondering—also in vain—whether there might possibly still be one of those Davy Crockett outfits with a coonskin cap, which he remembers as such a hit. And some of the tourists in the toy departments at this time of year

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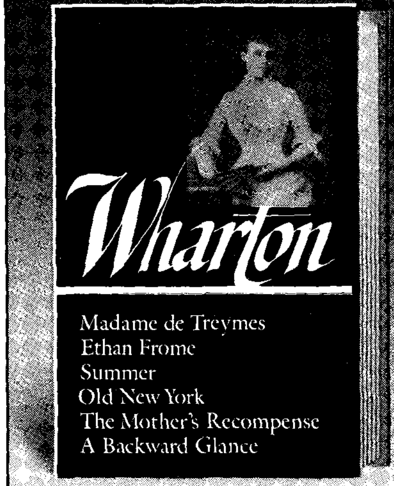

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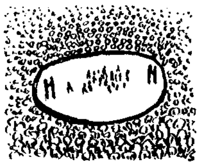
have the look of people searching for the perfect gift, which they are sure they have read about somewhere—anyhow, they will certainly know it when they see it. Perfect gifts vary from era to era and from child to child, of course. Goethe heard that a Frenchman was selling toy guillotines, and sent off for one, confident that it would be just what his little boy wanted. We haven't found any toy guillotines for sale this year, but there may be children you know who would be delighted to receive—for purely scientific, and not bloodthirsty, reasons—a videocassette called "The Marvelous Toys of Dr. Athelstan Spilhaus." Dr. Spilhaus is a retired oceanographer and "self-proclaimed child" who began collecting old mechanical toys in 1946 and now has more than four thousand of them. The cassette, which runs for an hour, shows the inner workings of over a hundred and fifteen of his toys, the earliest of which, dating back to 1791, shows two blacksmiths hammering at the severed heads of aristocrats guillotined during the French Revolution. The motto on the toy says "*Ici on reforge les têtes de familles*." The cassette (which costs $29.95 plus $4 for shipping and handling), can be ordered from Concept Associates, 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1214, Bethesda, Maryland 20814.



Many of this season's toy-department tourists who aren't searching for the perfect guillotine, say, are busy trying to decipher the lists of preferred toys which well-loved children have written out for them. Just as some generals go into battle fully prepared—at last—to fight the war before the one they are about to enter, grandparents and other surrogate Santas, having finally adjusted to the idea that what children want is dolls that talk your ear off, robots, battleships that convert into robots, action figures named He-Man, and dinosaurs, discover when this Christmas rolls around that talking dolls have been told to shut up (if they do talk, the children don't seem to listen), that quite a few of the other former must-have items are now regarded as infra dig, and that even dinosaurs, though not extinct—not *again*!—aren't crowding the toy counters as they used to. Such shoppers can thus take special comfort in the discovery that some fondly remembered items from long-ago Christmas lists are still around, celebrating significant anniversaries, which their sponsors are only too happy to remind people of. There's always someone in the crowd who asks, "What ever happened to Lincoln Logs?" Answer: It's celebrating its seventy-fifth year in the blocks department. Toy Park, among other places, has Lincoln Logs, still made of real wood; a hundred-and-three-piece set, with which a child can build a cabin and a general store (sign provided) is $18.29. In honor of the anniversary, Playskool, which makes the logs, polled preschool children around the country on their views of the Presidency. When they were asked what famous person should be the next President, nearly half said Mr. Rogers. Twelve per cent voted for Vanna White. If the candidate could be a person who was not famous, one four-year-old child nominated "my mom," and another voted for his "best friend Chris because he's bigger than me."

Betty Boop is not shy about admitting that she's sixty. But then when was she shy about anything? In 1933, in a case involving a charge of plagiarism, Judge John Woolsey, of the United States District Court here, described Betty, in an opinion that went in her favor, as having "a body of which the most noticeable characteristic is the most self-confident little bust imaginable." (Judge Woolsey is even better known for having decided, a few months earlier, that James Joyce's "Ulysses" was not obscene and could therefore be admitted to the United States. "It must always be remembered that his locale was Celtic and his season spring," he said in that opinion. Though we were on the lookout for them, we didn't find any Molly Bloom dolls this year.) Betty Boop's sixtieth was celebrated at the Hard Rock Café to the music of Cab Calloway. And there has been an announcement from F. A. O. Schwarz: "Betty Boop. A doll of real character is back." She is eighteen inches tall, wears a bright-red, very skimpy satin teddy, which shows off her self-confidence, a garter with an attached fake rose, and costs $25.

It's been fifty years since children first read the words "In an old house in Paris / that was covered with Vines / lived twelve little girls in two straight lines"—the beginning of the story of "Madeline." Schwarz has an eighteen-inch version of Madeline this year. She has bright-red yarn hair; wears a broad-brimmed yellow felt hat and a blue coat; has no bust at all but does have an appendix scar; and is $35.

Silly Putty, which was first brought out forty years ago, is still very much around. It all began in a General Electric laboratory in New Haven in 1943, when an engineer mixed boric acid and silicone oil in a test tube. When he threw the mixture on the floor, it bounced. Nothing came of this episode until after the war, when Peter Hodgson, a Connecticut advertising man, heard about it, borrowed a hundred and forty-seven dollars for a first batch, and shipped it off to Neiman-Marcus and the Doubleday stores. So far, enough Silly Putty has been sold to fill two hundred million of the plastic eggshells it's packed in. As you know, it can be molded, stretched, pounded, and then put back in the shell until somebody's ready to start all over again. Silly Putty is now put out by Binney & Smith, which also manufactures Crayolas. In fact, Silly Putty is now made and packed into its containers only a few feet from the room, in Easton, Pennsylvania, where Crayolas are assembled: quite a cozy spectacle to contemplate, isn't it—these two products that don't cost much and have delighted children for so long (Crayolas are eighty-seven years old) continuing to prosper, side by side, in a world in which Nintendo (also on many children's lists) is a major family investment. This year, after forty years of having found that it was easy being beige, the makers of Silly Putty decided to celebrate its anniversary by bringing it out in four new colors: yellow, blue, green, and magenta. The Penny Whistle stores have the magenta—a very nice red, we'd call it—for $1.75. This year, too—after taking a peek down the hall, perhaps—Crayola replaced eight of its colors with eight new colors, which it describes as "more vivid": jungle green, wild strawberry, and dandelion are included. Sure that admirers of the eight colors that were retired—raw umber and maize are among them—would be fighting mad (a Phillipsburg, N.J., man even founded CRAYON, the Committee to Reëstablish All Your Old Norms, and a New Yorker founded RUMPS—the Raw Umber and Maize Preservation Soci-

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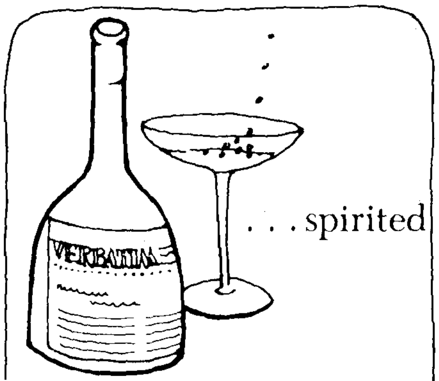

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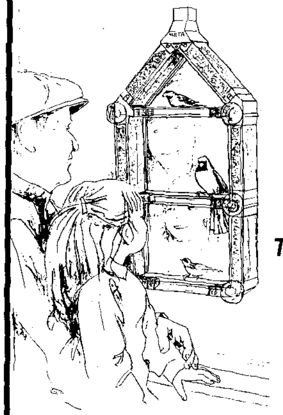

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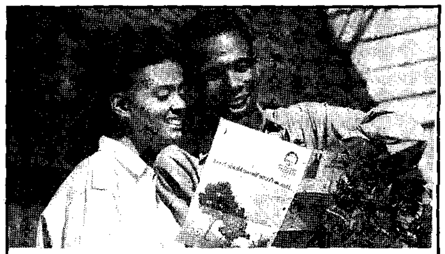

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ety), Binney & Smith established a Crayola Hall of Fame, in which the crayons in the departed colors will be on permanent display, so that their fans can come and visit them. There's nothing like a sense of history. At Kiddie City, a box of sixty-four Crayolas, including the new shades, is $2.99 and has a sharpener.

The "Peanuts" gang also hit forty this year, and received what some might consider a surfeit of honors for the old familiars. Last winter, when a portrait of Snoopy was hung on the wall of the Louvre, not far from the "Mona Lisa," Jack Lang, the French Minister of Culture, made a speech to the "Peanuts" cartoonist, Charles Schulz, in which he said of the famous beagle that his "character is both mythical and hedonistic, and he has taken over our collective consciousness and become a part of our everyday lives." Right now, the St. Louis Dog Museum is featuring an exhibit entitled "Snoopy: the Universal Dog." And the "Peanuts" crew are central figures in a Smithsonian exhibit entitled "This Is Your Childhood, Charlie Brown—Childhood and American Culture, 1945-1968." Among the exhibits are a Ding Dong School record-player and a Davy Crockett cereal bowl and coonskin cap (so that's where it's been, all along). There is now a whole book out, called "The Official Guide to Peanuts Collectibles," that gives the price range for old "Peanuts" items. It might cause some children you know to resist even further the suggestion that they give their old toys away. There's a plaque ($30 to $40) that shows Charlie Brown saying, "I've developed a new philosophy—I only dread one day at a time," and a Lucy banner ($10 to $15) on which she's saying—doubtless shouting—"I Don't Need Any Downs! I Want 'Ups' and 'Ups'!" Meanwhile, until it's time to make millions—or, anyhow, tens—on similar items lurking in the backs of their closets, some children would be happy to find under the tree on Christmas morning an eighteen-inch plush Snoopy that is $45 at Schwarz. We didn't see a Charlie Brown doll. He must be off somewhere dreading things again. "Happiness is wonderful," Schulz said recently. "But happiness is not funny."

THE subtitle of Alison Lurie's book "Don't Tell the Grown-ups," which was published earlier this year, is "Subversive Children's Literature." She says in the first chapter, "Most of the great works of juvenile literature are subversive in one way or another; they express ideas and emotions not generally approved of . . . they make fun of honored figures and piously held beliefs." Through the ubiquitous licensing process (a common theme in the toy world often seems to amount to "I'm licensed, therefore I am"), the central characters of such books turn up as dolls or action figures or plush animals or figures in games, demonstrating further to children—most of whom have a goodly supply of native disrespect to start with—that breaking the rules can get you everywhere. Of course, everyone knows that Donald Duck is a disrespectful sort—not to mention Bart Simpson, whom we'll get to in a while. Lurie has fun pointing out the subversive qualities of the characters in the children's classics, most of them British, that were published from the late-Victorian era through the nineteen-twenties—characters in whom the flouting of convention comes as more of a surprise, since they are mostly very well dressed and their sentences mostly parse.

Sometimes Lurie seems to be saying only that the memorable figures in children's literature were the ones with enough spirit to get into trouble. Peter Rabbit (who was very well dressed, for a rabbit) took the perilous chance of venturing into Mr. McGregor's garden even though his father's penalty for a similar excursion had been to be baked in a pie by Mrs. McGregor. Although Peter was sent to bed without his supper, unlike Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail, his well-behaved siblings, who "had bread and milk and blackberries," he remained entirely unrepentant. An eight-inch plush version of Peter Rabbit is $15.95 at the Books of Wonder stores, 132 Seventh Avenue (18th) and 464 Hudson Street (Barrow). Dover has seven of the Beatrix Potter books (including "Peter Rabbit")—reprints of the original editions, with Potter's illustrations—for $12.25. These are in the four-and-three-eighths-by-six-inch size, which Beatrix Potter favored, because children could handle them easily and they could be sold for just a shilling. (Those were the days, my friend.) Be sure you get Beatrix Potter's "Peter Rabbit," and not the version put out by some reform-minded editors a few years back which excised the part about Mr. Rabbit's being baked in a pie, on the theory that it would offend children's sensibilities; apparently, the reformers had never heard about the toy guillotine. Also at Books of Wonder, for $10.95 each, there are seven-inch plush beanbag versions of all four of the hardy travellers in "The Wind in the Willows." These, of course, include Toad, another subversive type, who, as Lurie points out, was "foolish, rash, and boastful as well as incorrigibly criminal" and yet at the end of the book was restored to his ancestral home and given a big banquet. And then there is Alice, who, unlike her sisters, went down the rabbit hole and, in the course of her adventures, derided the British educational and political systems and sassed her elders, including those of higher social station—shouting at the Queen of Hearts and her retinue, if you remember, "You're nothing but a pack of cards!" In the book, Lurie notes, "all the adults . . . are foolish, arbitrary, cruel, or mad," and "the only wholly decent and sensible person is Alice herself." An eight-inch Alice doll, with long blond hair and wearing a blue dress and a white pinafore, is available at Schwarz. This is one of more than five thousand dolls created by Madame Alexander, who died in October, at the age of ninety-five. An Alice was among the first dolls the toy-business pioneer made when she started her factory, in 1923, in Harlem, where it still is today. Along with the Alice doll, Schwarz has a new edition of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," illustrated by Michael Hague; you can get the doll and the book together for $60.

Peter Pan is an obviously subversive type; among the outlaw actions he got away with was kidnapping—a capital crime. (In the end, of course, he made restitution.) Videocassettes of the "Peter Pan" story in the Disney version and the one starring Mary Martin are about $15 and $17, respectively, all over town. The adults in the story—the parents, that is—were presented as rather silly people, and made to seem a bit irrelevant. Putting down parents—something that is often done by devisers of made-for-children entertainment and related toys—seems more subversive to parents than to children. The political analyst Ariel Dorfman, in his 1983 book "The Empire's Old Clothes," contends that when grown-

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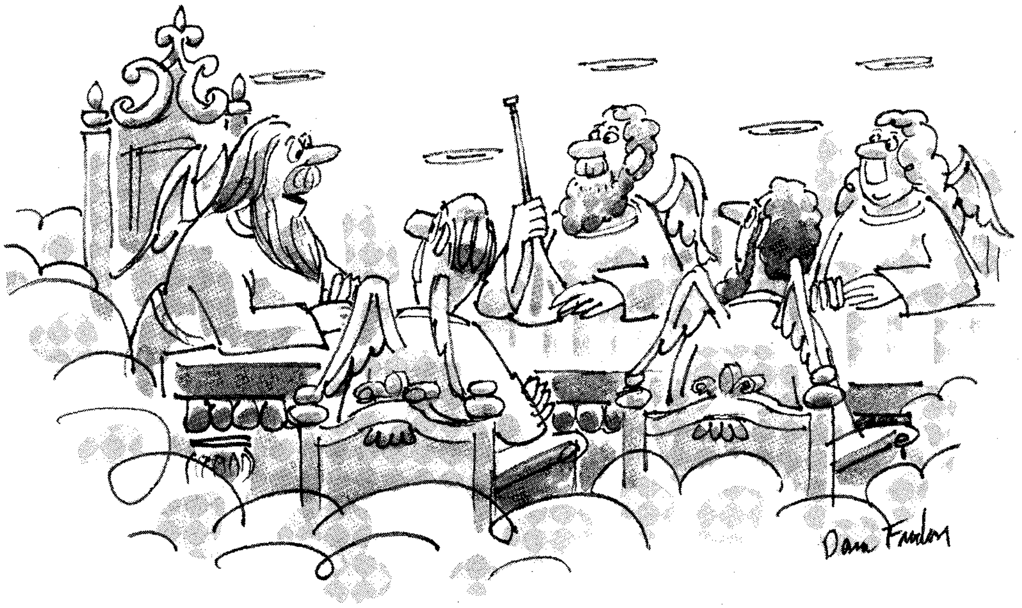

"Then it's agreed. Judgment Day, whenever it comes, will fall on a Thursday, so that they'll get the long weekend."

• •

ups appear in the Disney world they are generally pompous and useless sorts, whereas the child-type figures—like, for example, Donald Duck—represent goodness and intelligence and, acting on their own, emerge triumphant from their adventures. Dorfman, who is also the co-author of a 1975 study entitled "How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic," wants to know why, when grownups appear in the Disney world and in comics, on which so many toys are based, they are nearly always not mothers or fathers but uncles. Certainly Donald Duck has an uncle (you must remember Uncle Scrooge McDuck), but he seems not to be represented on the toy shelves. Donald himself, ten inches of subversive plush, is about $13 all around town.

In the "Pooh" books, Lurie reminds us, the grownups were put in their place by being turned into Christopher Robin's real-life stuffed animals, while he lorded it over the scene. In this case, it was the father of the house, A. A. Milne, who put the adults in context, as he saw it. At B. Shackman, 85 Fifth Avenue (16th), an eight-page set of Pooh and Christopher Robin paper dolls is $8.50. These are unusually large as paper dolls go; Christopher Robin is fifteen inches tall. This set also has many background scenes showing other Pooh-world familiars. Everyone knows that Christopher Robin had a father—he wrote the book. It turns out that Christopher Robin also had a mother. In fact, Christopher Robin (the real one) said a few years ago, "It was my mother who used to come and play in the nursery with me and tell him about the things we did. It was she who provided most of the material for my father's books"—apparently creating the characters of the toy animals which on the printed page (and on the toy shelves) became Pooh, Eeyore, and the others (though possibly not Kanga, the obnoxiously bossy mother figure). Does it mean anything, by the way, that the mothers of both Bambi and Babar, two of the best-loved characters in the children's world, were killed off early on—hunters shot them dead—by the authors of the books about them? Ah, well. The critic John Rowe Townsend, apparently tired of pontifications on the true meaning of children's literature, declared the "Pooh" books to be "totally without hidden significance." You can let the children on your list decide for themselves: a two-volume set containing the four A. A. Milne books for children—"Winnie-the-Pooh," "The House at Pooh Corner," "When We Were Very Young," and "Now We Are Six"—is $29.95. Like all books and cassettes mentioned in this report, these can be bought almost anywhere such items are sold. The prices will vary from store to store and sometimes from hour to hour. Just for kicks, you might like to buy them at Eeyore's Books for Children, 2212 Broadway (79th) and 25 East 83rd Street, the city's largest children's bookstores.

Just because Santa Claus could be described as a mythical hedonistic figure doesn't mean that he always escapes criticism. The tune that is played more often than any other except "Jingle Bells" in the Christmas season (or maybe it just seems that way) is "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," who last year celebrated his fiftieth anniversary of lighting the way for Santa's reindeer. Enterprising scriptwriters managed to extend the song's few lines of lyrics into a television special featuring Burl Ives; an audiocassette of the soundtrack is $14.95. Just before Christmas last year, a Bronx resident was exercised enough about Rudolph's experience to write a letter to the *Daily News* in which he noted that Rudolph, "scorned, humiliated, and laughed at," had been "shown no mercy by the traditional antlered octet." The letter writer continued, "Shame on you Donder, Blitzen, etc., etc.," denouncing them for their part in "this annual rendition of intolerance." And he demanded, "Just where was Santa Claus when Rudy was being harassed?" Where are New Yorkers, outraged by some injustice, going to send their outraged letters if the *Daily News* should not survive the current strike? Maybe *Newsday*? Last year at Christmastime, that paper ran an editorial complaining that the Disney animated movie "The Little Mermaid" presented a sexist stereotype of a spunkless female. A reader from Bayside, Queens, was so incensed by what he called the "fishy" comments in the editorial that he wrote in to say he had used the page it was printed on "to wrap up some leftover shrimp." "The Little Mermaid" video, which is about $19 at Woolworth, is eighth on the video-sales charts; cassettes favored by children turn up among the sales numbers rather than the rentals numbers because children want to watch things over and over and *over*. The extent to which the video market relies on these young clients—and vice versa—can be seen in the listing of the top ten items on the video-sales charts: seven are animated cartoons or—in the case of "The Sound of Music"—are especially popular among children. However, today's two leading children's videos, the Disney "Peter Pan" and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Movie," are only second and third on the sales charts. If somebody watches the top-listed "Pretty Woman" over and over and *over*, it is not likely to be a five-year-old.

CONTEMPLATING the downturn in the national economy, toy-business leaders—like the smiling dolls they sell—try to look on the bright side of things. For instance, a minor baby boom is under way: four million children, or potential customers, were born in this country in 1989—the largest number in thirty years. An industry problem that the economy does not get blamed for is that, as toy experts point out, children stop playing with toys at an earlier age than they used to. Gary Jacobson, an analyst at Kidder, Peabody & Company, said recently, "Twenty years ago, twelve-year-old kids played with dolls and cars. Today, they are most likely interested in CDs, movies, and the opposite sex"—concerns that are covered in other store departments. Early in 1989, the Disney channel decided to revive the "Mickey Mouse Club" show, which was so popular in the nineteen-fifties. Big Mouseketeer ears like the ones worn by former clubhouse regulars did not appeal to today's children, however, and it was also decided that the old, slow-moving Mouseketeer song—if you remember, at the end of "Full Metal Jacket" the troops in Vietnam sing it as they return to battle—had to go. Its replacement is a rap number: "Mickey Mickey Mickey Mouse Rock the house . . . Gonna Party, Gonna Party . . ." (The new "Mickey Mouse Club" show has been on for eighteen months now, and some of the younger soldiers in Saudi Arabia could have caught it, but no one knows whether they would be likely to sing it as they go into battle.) "You can't go back to Donna Reed," the new head Mouseketeer, the comedian Fred Newman, said before the new Mouseketeers' first show, and he referred to present-day kids' "Lettermanesque sensibility." Apparently, you can't go back, either, to "The Brady Bunch," the early-seventies television show whose members used to be commemorated in the form of dolls and games on the toy counters. Earlier this year, a prisoner in a Boston jail scaled a five-story wall to the jail's roof and announced that he wouldn't come down until the correction officers named for him all six children in the Brady family. None of the officers could oblige, but he eventually came down anyhow, although, as he and various bystanders (of baby-boomer vintage) pointed out, everybody knows that the Brady kids' names were Marcia, Greg, Jan, Peter, Cindy, and Bobby. Whatever is sung (or not sung) in his honor, Mickey Mouse (who has been around for sixty-two years now) is known to all. Childcraft has a very handsome Mickey Mouse hand puppet, a foot tall, for $9.95. In his tuxedo, bow tie, and white gloves, he's clearly ready to perform on a puppet stage (or to pop up from behind a chair back). Childcraft also has what it calls an "activity quilt" in the shape of Mickey, for the youngest member of the family. When you put the baby on the quilt—twenty-eight by forty-one inches and machine-washable—spread out on the floor, the baby will find that it is equipped with various sources of fun: a mirror, a noisemaker, a squeaker, a rattle, and a teething ring. It's $39.95.

A character who had trouble with a list of names is a newcomer to the toy counters: the head of the truly subversive Simpson cartoon family. The irascible Homer Simpson was shown applying for a job as a department-store Santa, and when he was asked to name the famous reindeer he said "Dasher, Dancer, Prancer . . . Nixon." This scene was from the family's first full-length television appearance—a Christmas special last year. (So it's not true that all the current toy-department stars have been around for a generation—or two or three.) The title of the special was "The Simpsons: Roasting on an Open Fire." Matt Groening, the cartoonist who is responsible for the Simpsons (and one of whose comic-strip collections is entitled "Childhood Is Hell"), advised those planning to watch the special, "Don't tune in expecting to see 'The Little Mermaid.' " If you should be asked to name the Simpsons, they are Homer and Marge, the parents, and Bart, Lisa, and Baby Maggie, the kids. Groening has said that he named Homer Simpson after a character who—would you have expected this?—was stoned by a mob in Nathanael West's "Day of the Locust." An episode in the weekly television series—which has been on for

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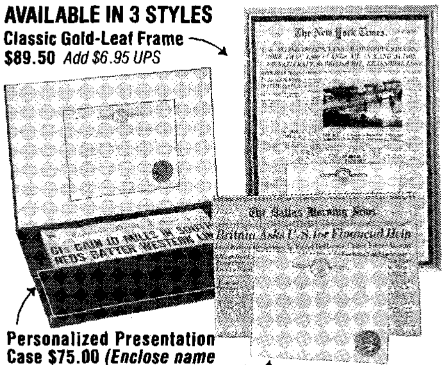

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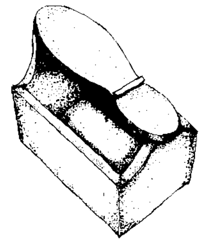

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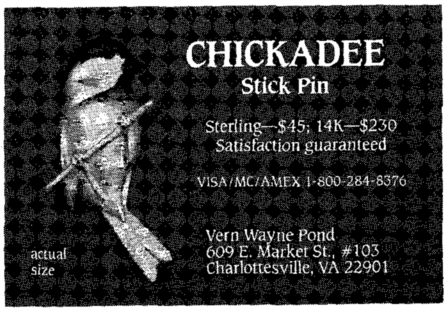

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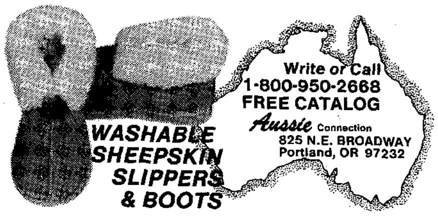

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nearly a year now, portrayed Homer's boss running for office and Homer being ordered to dig up dirt on the opponent, a genteel lady politician named Mary Bailey; Mary Bailey, as Simpsons insiders like to point out, was the name of the character played by Donna Reed in "It's a Wonderful Life." (If you think of renting "It's a Wonderful Life" during the holidays, you might try to distract the older kids from noticing that the institution that Jimmy Stewart's nice neighbors ply him with money to rescue is one of those savings-and-loans they may have been reading horror headlines about lately.) The most famous Simpson is, of course, Bart. His T-shirt saying "Underachiever and Proud of It, Man" has been banned in some schools as un-American and denounced by former Secretary of Education William Bennett. Bart takes on even the Almighty —not your average cartoon event. Asked to say grace, he folds his hands, bows his head, and says, "Dear God, we pay for all this stuff ourselves so thanks for nothing." His sister Lisa calls prayer "the last refuge of a scoundrel." Clearly, these kids are in for severe reprisal from one authority or another. Instead, "The Simpsons" has risen rapidly toward the top of the TV charts. When the weekly show achieved a virtual tie in the ratings with "The Cosby Show" in a head-to-head encounter, the *Post*, going with heretical over wholesome, gave it a jubilant front-page headline: "BART BEATS THE COS." Groening, who is thirty-six, said recently that he thinks the reason the show got on the air has to do with generations: "Finally there are network executives young enough to remember watching cartoons and enjoying them as kids." This month, the J & B Scotch people, having polled a thousand Americans, reported that more of them wanted to have dinner with Bart Simpson than with George Bush. A colorful plastic figure of Bart, fifteen inches tall (he's called "Really Rude Bart"), is $19.99, at Kiddie City, and, at the same place, a box containing the whole family—the dolls are described as "bendable," but there are Simpsons we wouldn't try to bend—is $9.99.

Other newcomers to the toy counters are the New Kids on the Block—toys related to the five well-scrubbed Boston boys in the group of that name, who are white but sing and dance to black-style pop music. If you can't recite their names, legions of twelve-year-old girls will rush forward to help you out: Jordan, Jonathan, Joe, Donnie, and Danny. "I just want to breathe the same air that they breathe," one little girl said in explaining why she had to see them in person. Among the reasons the five are such a huge hit, according to a vice-president of a company that manufactures New Kids sleeping bags, is that "there's nothing out there for girls"—nothing, that is, if they're tired of Barbie and not interested in dolls that shiver or burp (or worse). Even if you leave out G.I. Joe, and toy trucks and trains, it's not little girls who—with some exceptions—are preoccupied with Nintendo and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and, for that matter, dinosaurs. So far, the girls have helped the New Kids sell fourteen million albums and boosted two books about them onto the best-seller lists. They have done their part so well that a few weeks ago the Kids turned up on the *Forbes* list of the highest-paid people in the entertainment business. Treated as a group, they qualified for fifth place (Cosby is first once again), having raked in seventy-eight million in the last two years, sixty-one million of it in 1990. Hasbro left off fitting out G.I. Joe long enough to make New Kids dolls; twelve inches tall, and dressed in concert regalia, they are $24.99 each at the Toy Park. Some households may feel that they have really done their part if the little girls who live there insist that they have to breathe the air breathed by all five of the dolls. But, as the girls may point out, that would be cheaper than a basic Nintendo set, which is $120 or so, and a few cartridges, which run from $20 to $40 apiece. (Shop around.) The hand-held Nintendo, Game Boy, is just under $100 in most stores.

In one form or another, Nintendo, which has been on the American market for only five years, is said to be in one of every five American homes. The Japanese-owned company accounts for four billion dollars of the toy industry's thirteen-billion-dollar retail sales, and there's only minimal competition from American-sponsored video games. The children you know will undoubtedly tell you what aspect of the Nintendo phenomenon they can't do without. It's nice to know, since Nintendo has taken what appears to be a permanent position at the top of the toy charts, that such ratings are based on the amount of money spent for items. A recent *Playthings* list that ranks toys according to unit sales shows that two types of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle action figures, which cost under $4 and under $6, respectively, rank first and second. (On the same list a set of sixteen Crayolas, costing under a dollar, ranks fourth. Perhaps this is a more sensible world than we were beginning to think it was.) Even in the listings that are based on total money earned, the Mutant Turtle figures, or T.M.N.T.s, as they are known in the trade, are second only to Nintendo—that is, ahead of Barbie and way ahead of G.I. Joe. Four hundred million of them will have been sold this year and, including related licensed products, will have accounted for a billion dollars in sales. It all started, if you remember, with a story line in which the owner of four pet turtles (you know their names: all together now—Donatello, Leonardo, Raphael, and Michaelangelo) accidentally dropped them into this city's sewer system, where some radioactive goo spilled on them by a bad guy turned them into turtle mutants who are crazy about pizza. (The story line was thought up by two out-of-work cartoonists in New England, who are now very, very rich.) Before Playmates Toys, a small California company, took a chance on this concept, every major toy company had turned it down. (Hasbro described it as "too bizarre.") There are now T.M.N.T. enclaves in many stores. The turtle quartet has been augmented by a couple of dozen other figures, so, once again, bring instructions from home. An item that caught our attention was a $50 T.M.N.T. play set at Macy's. Some children while away their time with doll houses or toy castles. T.M.N.T. devotees will, it seems, be very happy with this item, which is called a Sewer Playset and measures twenty-two inches by twenty-seven. Several plastic sewer pipes link up beneath the plastic pavement. There is an air stack; there is a telephone pole with dangling cables. There is a manhole with an elevator and a sign above it that says "DANGER TURTLES WORKING"; a construction fence with peepholes; and a "sewerscope" (something like a periscope). Inside the Playset, the turtles, directed by their masters, can gang together or

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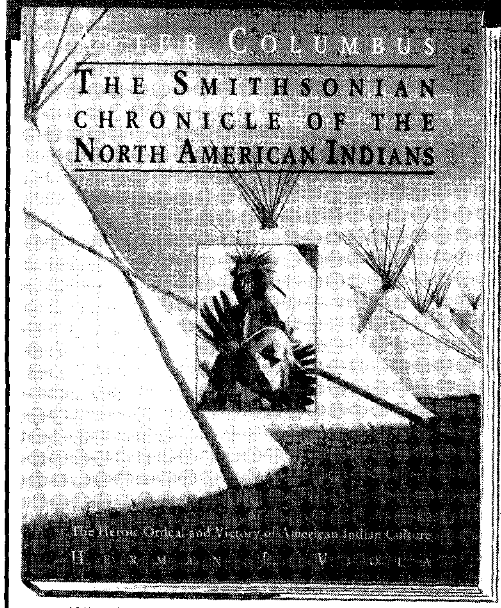
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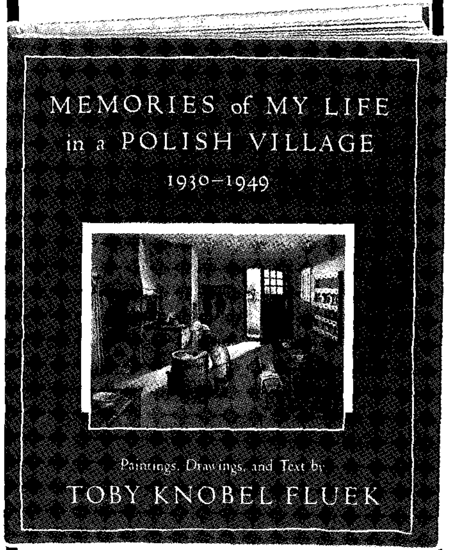
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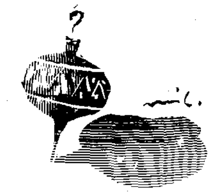
confront their enemy bad guys, climbing in and out of the sewer pipes and splashing about in Retromutagen Ooze (the T.M.N.T. version of slime; three-dollar packets are sold separately),hour after hour, to their hearts' content. And so the golden days glide by.

Something you may not have been counting on finding, by the way, is a seventeen-inch plush figure of Raphael, one of the T.M.N.T.s, dressed up as Santa Claus—almost certainly a future collectible—which is $14.99 at Toys R Us. And in the children's-book department, we *have to report a disturbing* discovery. The Birch Lane Press has begun putting out a series of picture books called Upside Down Tales, of which the first two, "Cinderella" and "Jack and the Beanstalk," were published last month. Open "Cinderella" and read the familiar fairy tale. Turn the book upside down and read, from the other direction, quite a different story, written by one of her allegedly wicked stepsisters, about how Cinderella made things up all the time and dressed in rags because she didn't take care of her clothes, and so on. In the upside-down version of "Jack and the Beanstalk," the giant was a sweet-natured fellow and Jack a juvenile-delinquent sort who quite gratuitously chopped down the beanstalk. These subversive books, which could encourage children to take a jaundiced look at many of the grand literary truths that grownups have been bringing them up on, are $12.95 each. If you want to renew the children's faith in the older generation, you could contribute to a good cause and at the same time give them something that will please them. The Early Learning Centre—which calls itself "The Intelligent Toy Store," and has ninety branches around the country—sells plush versions of endangered species identified by the World Wildlife Fund, and gives ten per cent of the holiday-season profits to the fund. Our favorite was an eight-inch-long snow leopard, for $17.99.



Currently unendangered species, animal and otherwise, from the toy world were on exhibit this year as usual in Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, in which the giant balloons are the acknowledged stars. In "What I Saw at the Revolution," the account of her days as a Ronald Reagan speechwriter, Peggy Noonan said that she had thought of the former President, whom she greatly admires, as "a gigantic heroic balloon floating" in that parade. The balloon that got the wildest cheers from the crowd was Bart Simpson, new this year—toothy, pop-eyed, angular of hair as ever, his feet resting on a giant skateboard. Other giant balloons were Bugs Bunny, standing on a gold star in celebration of his fiftieth birthday, and Snoopy and Woodstock and Spider-man; there were thirteen in all, all of them male—but that's the way it is in the giant-balloon pantheon. The television commentators mentioned that the parade was dedicated to the troops in Saudi Arabia. There was no G.I. Joe balloon, however. Formally, the parade this year was a tribute to the Muppets' Jim Henson, who died very suddenly last May 16th. In the papers the next day, the Disney corporation, which had just made arrangements to buy the Muppet empire for an estimated hundred million dollars, took out full-page ads showing Mickey Mouse with a large teardrop running down his cheek. As the balloon representing Kermit the Frog—one of the Muppet characters that Henson played—loomed in sight in the Macy's parade, there were loud bursts of applause from the children, and tears in the eyes of some of the grownups. But, see here, weren't Jim Henson and the Muppets mostly about having fun—as he would have reminded everybody? Those who attended a memorial service for Henson at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine were asked not to wear black, and, by his request, the music was by a Dixieland band, which played the recessional—"When the Saints Go Marching In"—for the two thousand guests, many of them children who had brought their favorite Muppet toys. For a reminder of the old fun, you might try the "Christmas Eve on Sesame Street" video ($19.95), in which all the old gang, including Kermit, whoop it up to various jumping-around beats, slowing down sweetly for "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Where's Lucy's banner saying "I Don't Need Any Downs! I Want 'Ups' and 'Ups'!"? The biggest hit of all at the Macy's parade was, naturally, Santa Claus, who arrived to a great roar at the parade's end while the music played "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." Of course he is. Merry Christmas!

BOOKS

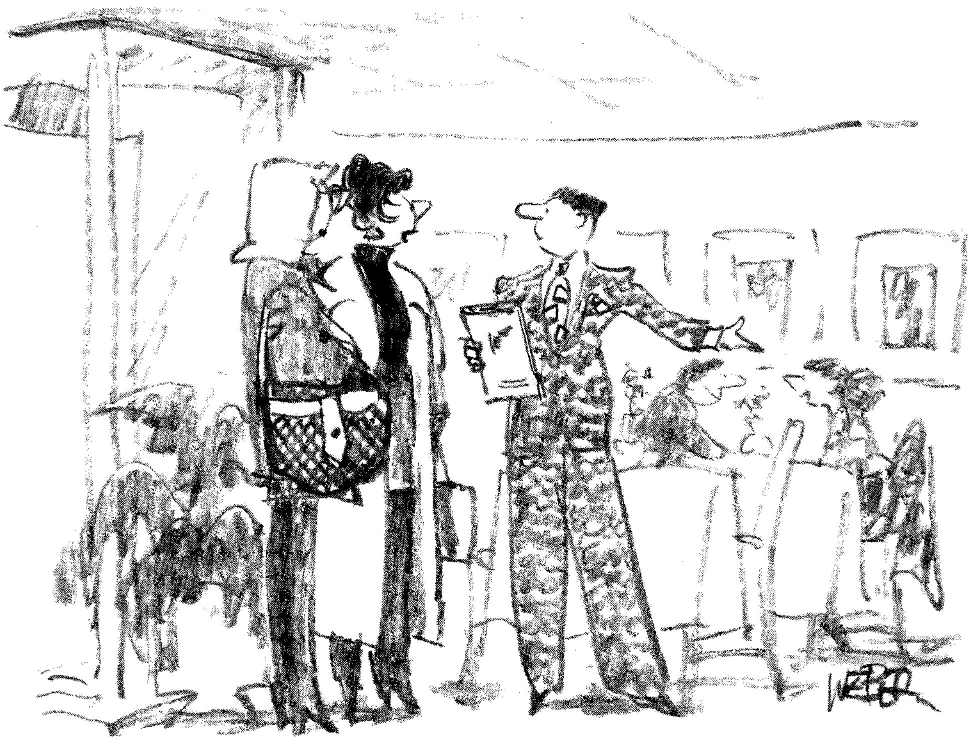
Grandmaster

A BIOGRAPHY of Vladimir Nabokov is, to use one of those gently recondite but exact polysyllabic words that the Master cherished and honed to lustrous precision, "supernumerary"—like a second butler or an ancillary housemaid in reserve for Sundays. Nabokov was, supremely and incessantly, the biographer of himself. There have been many writers who have composed autobiographies, memoirs, recollections. There have been more who have inwoven the record of their lives with their poetry or fiction, often inextricably. The Nabokov case is more intense. This virtuoso of imagining imagined, in essence, only the shimmering procession of his own works and days. What he invented was himself (more directly and in a more immediately documentary way than Proust, even). There is scarcely a page in Nabokov—and this includes the arcane, haughty philology of his edition of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin"—that is not a facsimile, although sometimes masked, of his personal existence. If we had only "Mary" (the first novel, published in the spring of 1926), "Speak, Memory," "Laughter in the Dark," "The Gift," and "Ada," there would not be much in Nabokov's peregrine existence and inward kingdoms which we could not date and reconstruct. Even the purest fictions, such as "Invitation to a Beheading," "Lolita," and the incomparable "Pale Fire," are radically "mirrored"; they are sharp splinters of intimately chronicled self-reflection. And such works as "The Defense" and "The Real Life of Sebastian Knight" are almost straightforwardly confessional. They conjoin readily with what we have of Nabokov's letters and with the witness of his contemporaries and familiars.

The first volume of Brian Boyd's monumental "Vladimir Nabokov" (Princeton University Press; $25) is, therefore, something of a luxury, a dispensable celebration. The industry is prodigious: bibliographical, financial, amorous circumstances are marshalled in extenso; the political-social backdrop is voluminously provided. Even so, this compendium takes us only to Nabokov's flight from collapsing France in May, 1940. (The magician was born in 1899, on April 23rd—Shakespeare's birthday.) Boyd tells us much, perhaps too much. It is not entirely his failing if this great labor of love leaves one with a complex, hybrid sentiment of superfluity and, at the same time, of lack, of a center still elusive.

Vladimir Nabokov's own snapshots and frescoes of his opulent, highly cultured, polyglot childhood in St. Petersburg, of the passionately loved country estate, of regal travels abroad are prodigal. They restore to invulnerable presence the twilight years of the condemned, lost world of the Russian élite prior to the disasters of 1905 and the apocalypse of 1917. In Nabokov's whole work there is no figure more commanding, more stellar (in the sense of a cool radiance) than that of his father, the eminent legal scholar and liberal politician. The travel log in "The Gift," at once minutely documentary and transfigured into tranquil epic, of the fictional journeys made by a character based on Nabokov's father through Siberia, Central Asia, and the marches of Tibet is among the touchstones of twentieth-century remembrance. Brian Boyd fills in graphic details: a visit to Biarritz in the autumn of 1909 entailed tutor, maid, governess, nurse, valet, and dachshund. Three years earlier, the boy Nabokov, following a family tradition, had discovered butterflies. Their vibrant drift, their depths of camouflage, their ephemeral but tenacious life cycles, the emblematic secret of their metamorphoses (in which he came to perceive the very spoor of primal creation and of art) were to throng Nabokov's existence. Lepidopterology is, like chess, integral to the genius of grave playfulness, of microscopic notice, of self-distancing from the human commonplace which determines Nabokov's writings and persona. It is no accident, though Boyd does not argue the connection, that it was in November, 1917, when the family had found harried refuge in the Crimea, that Nabokov composed his first chess problem.

There had been mellifluous verse, published, at the author's expense, in 1916. A first novel followed, and a garland of flirtations in the approved style of the dandy. English, taught him by a pride of governesses and tutors, was to Nabokov second nature. Brian Boyd gives us the facts, and these matter. But it is the absolutely pivotal,



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underlying theme that needs insight. Like Oscar Wilde—a decisive precedent—and like Conrad, Borges, and Beckett, Nabokov belongs to a constellation of the linguistically unhoused. It is not only that he writes sovereignly in several languages. It is that his native or mother tongue, Russian, acquires an ideal, a talismanic, status, precisely because he could from the very outset choose *not* to speak it—or, more accurately, because he could view it from an internal "outsideness." In essence, it is this strange eros in respect of his elect tongues that is Nabokov's one and constant subject. It is precisely this eros and the allegories of incest which it suggests that will be enacted in "Lolita" and in "Ada" (as yet the most resistant of Nabokov's mature fictions).

His schooling in Babel and his near-perfect pitch for the music of languages made Nabokov a grandmaster of exiles. Mr. Boyd's meticulous research cannot match Nabokov's own memories of flannel-trousered, bell-thronged afternoons in the Cambridge of 1919. Nabokov spent dulcet hours on the river and the tennis courts. He flinched at the lack of privacy but cultivated fellow-migrants. The notion that ostracism from Russia and the past could be lasting darkened in him:

> Mother dear, yesterday I woke up in the middle of the night, and asked someone—I don't know whom—the night, the stars, God: will I really *never return*, is it really all finished, wiped out, destroyed? . . . In my sleep I saw black, eye-spotted caterpillars on vines of willow herb, then those yellowy-red wooden chairs, with fretwork backs like horses' heads which, remember, stood under the stairway in *our* house. . . . Mother, we must return, mustn't we, it cannot be that this has all died, turned to dust—such an idea could drive one mad! I would like to describe every little bush, every stalk in our divine park at Vyra.

The whole program and aesthetic are there: the literally maddening fear of loss, of enforced oblivion, and the resolve of the artist to reconstitute every detail, to make history impotent in the strong light of exact imagining.

What was left of Nabokov's enchanted past was shattered, irreparably, by the political assassination of his father, in Berlin, on March 28, 1922. (The diary account published by Boyd is among the foremost examples of Nabokov's art, at once spontaneous and governed, desperate and stoically truthful.) Under rending psychological and material pressure, the manifold elements of a singular power coalesced. Nabokov translated "Alice in Wonderland," the subtext of so much of his fiction; he published, for the first time, one of his chess problems. Fourteen months after his father's death, Nabokov met Véra Slonim. Their marriage was to become one of the finest collaborative alliances and partnerships of sensibility in modern letters. Henceforth, Vladimir Nabokov's solitude was to be richly shared.

It is in the narrative of the Berlin years, from 1922 to January, 1937, that Boyd's tireless excavations come justly into their own. Nabokov's daily struggle for survival in a climate of lunatic inflation, of political turmoil, of growing uncertainty as to Europe's future was that of every émigré. It was compounded of the macabre and the hilarious—of humiliations in cabbage-dank boarding houses and momentary windfalls (an article or translation sold, a handout from a transient patron). No one who has not scrabbled for survival and self-respect in the snake pit of a refugee community, with its recurrent hysterias, rumors, false hopes, clan-loathings, can fairly judge what Nabokov experienced and mastered. Boyd's catalogue method becomes grimly eloquent. He lists Nabokov's public readings (they became occasions of triumph); his works as translator; the lessons he gave in languages, in tennis; his moves from *pension* to *pension* (some of the most luxuriant and princely of Nabokov's prose was written in the grotty kitchens or bathrooms of one-room accommodations). During this dark time, moreover, Nabokov largely supported his stricken mother and, when possible, proved generous to the spectral throng of Russian exiles, parasites, and suicidal misfits which ebbed and flooded through Berlin, Paris, and Prague. As we follow the tale, even the lists of the totally ephemeral journals, publishing houses, amateur or semi-professional theatricals for which Nabokov provided material take on a certain macabre dignity.

The sheer wonder, of course, is Nabokov's productivity during these bitter years. In turn he wrote—in Russian—and published "King, Queen, Knave," "The Defense," "The Eye," "Glory," "Laughter in the Dark." His pen name, Sirin, became illustrious in the Russian-speaking world of Central and Western Europe. A style, an angle of perception unequalled since Gogol had burst upon the Russian language. Nabokov could create at uncanny speed: "Despair" was begun on July 31, 1932; by September 10th, the first draft was completed. Stories and sketches poured out. Here and there, translations into both French and English began to appear. Nabokov was tormented by their inadequacy but knew that he must, somehow, go into a yet deeper exile—exile from his adored Russian—if his mastery and originality were to be generally recognized.

Meanwhile, and across diverse interruptions, Nabokov was composing "Invitation to a Beheading" (the most Kafkaesque of his fables) and "The Gift." The latter has been judged one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century Russian literature. Four principal strands mesh in a design as mesmeric, as strangely logical as that of the Bukhara rugs the character in "The Gift" wondered at on his Asian treks. As in every Nabokov novel, the author's childhood—with its odors of birch and summer, its star showers of butterflies, its whispering house—is the echo chamber of narrative. I have already alluded to the heroic prose poem in which the novelist sings his father's austere prowess. The "imaginary" poet whose Berlin life Nabokov sets down is among the few credible poets—and a minor one at that, a figure even more difficult to portray—in modern literature. The "fictive" descriptions of how he writes his poems and of the sentiments they elicit from him put the bulk of critical and theoretical texts on aesthetic creation in a pitiful shade. In intricate counterpoint, there is the inset "Life of Chernyshevsky," the nineteenth-century radical publicist, pamphleteer, programmatic novelist—a figure expressly inimical to Nabokov, yet one that he quickens to life with a strange, cool empathy. Had we only the Berlin novels, and "The Gift" above all, Nabokov's stature in Russian prose and in the modernist currents that include Kafka, Musil, Joyce, and Canetti would be a considerable one.

Despite Véra's Jewish identity, the Nabokovs hung on in Berlin. He observed the Nazi bestialization of public life with fastidious scorn. Departure took place at almost the last moment. In Paris, Nabokov was briefly but vehemently involved with a lady who "earned a skimpy living as a poodle trimmer" (surely a touch he himself might have contrived). At 5 P.M. on February 11, 1938, Nabokov gave a reading, replacing at the last minute the Hungarian writer Jolán Földes. As Nabokov mounted the platform, most of the Hungarian colony hurried away. There was, however, compensation: "the sight of Joyce sitting, arms folded and glasses glinting, in the midst of the Hungarian football team."

The year 1939 proved to be one of near-destitution. But already, with the enigmatic pacing and economy that mark human beings of exceptional intelligence, Nabokov had initiated the decisive move. It was in English that Sirin began writing "The Real Life of Sebastian Knight." When he boarded ship for America in May, 1940—again, the very last moment—Sirin was already on the way to becoming Nabokov.

Brian Boyd's posture throughout is one of adulation. Hosannas cascade. "Nabokov makes the problems of metaphysics urgent again." The menace that the boy Luzhin exudes in "The Defense" is "like Shakespeare." "The patterns of 'The Defense' have Bach's

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melodic beauty and bracing rigor of design, but to this exhilarating combination Nabokov adds more." "The Gift" is Nabokov's ninth Russian novel; its "mass" and "daring" are, therefore, those of "Beethoven's Ninth." This book is, "in the eyes of many, the greatest Russian novel of the century." (Biely's "St. Petersburg"? Pasternak's "Doctor Zhivago"? Solzhenitsyn's "The First Circle"? Bulgakov's " The Master and Margarita"?) Tolstoy and Dostoyevski and Nabokov's father fought for current political freedom and the abolition of the death penalty; Nabokov "turned away from the issues of his times to the issues of eternity," Boyd says, and he adds, "He fought for freedom too, but his struggle was not so much a social as a metaphysical one: an incessant effort to find a way out of the goodly prison of consciousness, a lifelong campaign to repeal the death sentence nature has imposed on us all." (There is in London a satiric periodical in which such sentences are reproduced competitively for the "tripe" and "pseud" award of the year.) At other points Boyd tumbles into parodies of the old *Time* voice: "St. Petersburg. Dawn. April 23, 1899. A day ago the ice began breaking up on the Neva, but at this early hour—already the sun rises at 4:30—the air temperature has dropped again well below freezing. No traffic clip-clops along the embankment." Often, the manner turns fey: accounting for Nabokov's fitful school record, Boyd explains that he was "a chirping cicada, not an industrious ant, a playful otter, not an eager beaver." In the late winter of 1916, he says, "the reek of disaster thickened over Russia."

These stylistic excesses matter, because they render impossible any critical distance. Would that Mr. Boyd had given us just his tenacious, penetrating biographical and bibliographical research. This, however, is interrupted by lengthy sections of critical evaluation of successive works—evaluations very nearly uniform in their innocent adoration. They actually do Vladimir Nabokov, himself the most arrogantly acerbic of judges, ill service. What is stringently needed is a responsible, discriminating look at a complicated, uneven, fundamentally problematic body of work—at an achievement that deliberately demands to be regarded as major but much of whose peculiar spell intimates marginality and the arcane charms of the "minor classic." Do

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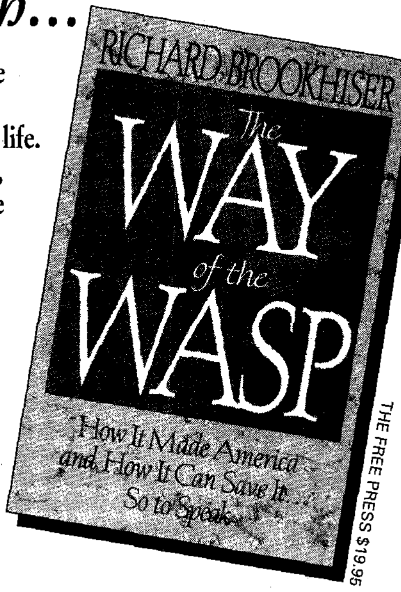

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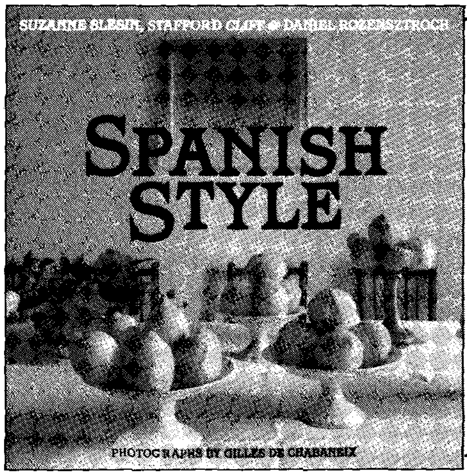
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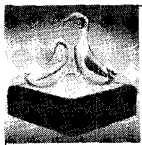

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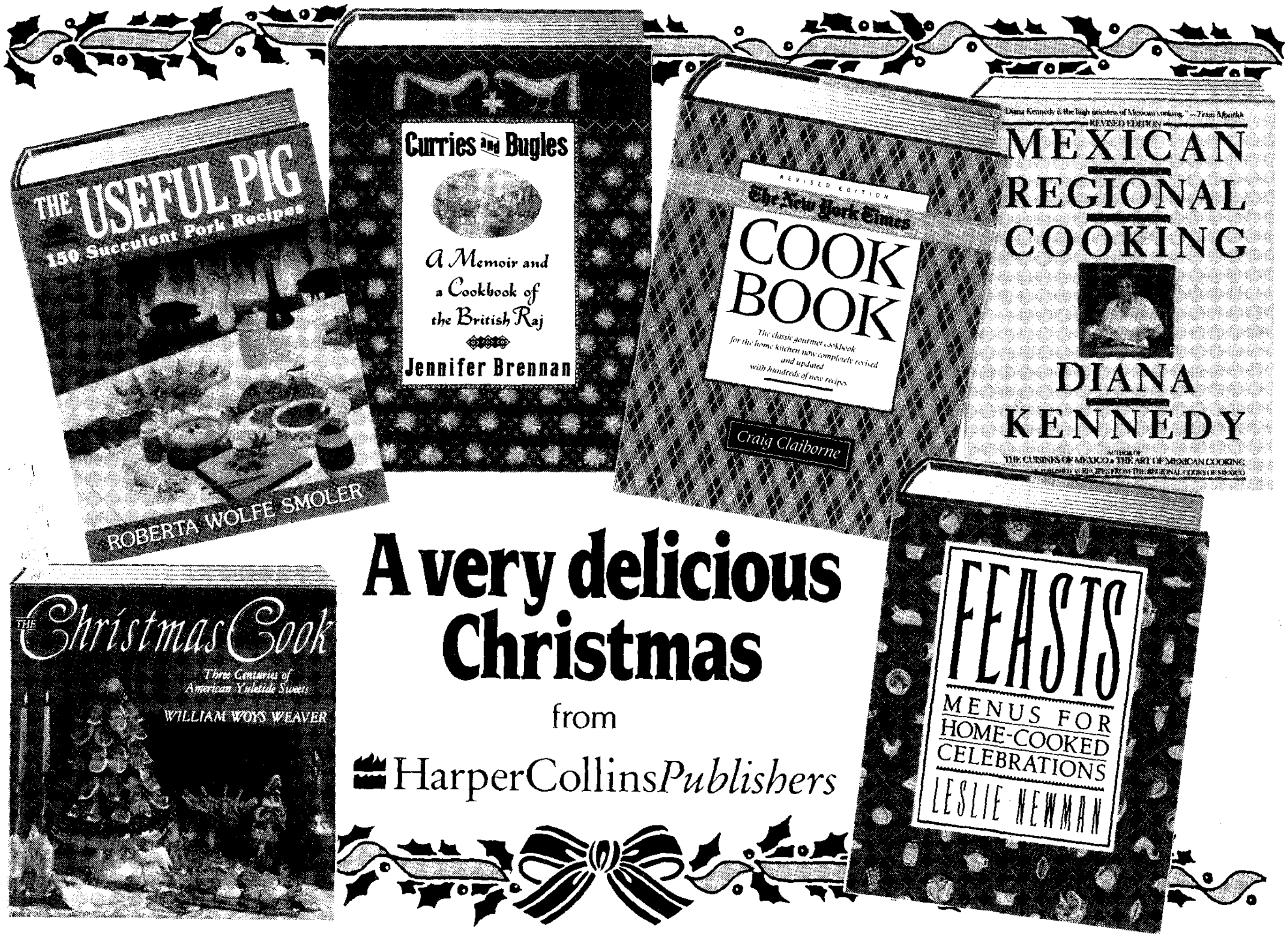
we instinctively set Nabokov beside, say, Dostoyevski (whom he childishly contemned) and Proust, or beside Wilde and Schnitzler?

Anyone incapable of reading the Russian poems and fictions in the original must be wary of even attempting a reply. It is evident that Nabokov's Russian possesses a sensuous register, a darting elegance that not even the finest of translations and self-translations can adequately convey. Yet on this point, too, there are perplexities: native Russian readers have told me that works such as "Lolita" and "Ada" are far more persuasive in Anglo-American than in their homecoming. And it is among the defining traits of truly great literature—certain lyric poets excepted—that it will "pass" in translation. We need not know any Russian to have our very lives changed by Tolstoy or Dostoyevski, or by "Doctor Zhivago," flawed and technically lamed masterpiece though it is.

Rereading such undoubted jewels as "Laughter in the Dark" and "The Gift," I have found the name of another writer pressing on me. The fact that he is not, as far as I know, mentioned by Nabokov or cited among his sources alerts one. It is George Meredith (now so little read) whose lacy, ironizing, convoluted voice and fictional tactics come increasingly to mind. The mixture of prose and poetry in Meredith's "Modern Love" almost imperatively solicits comparison with Nabokov. No precedent is more suggestive of Nabokov's frequent amalgam of domestic and social black comedy than Meredith's superb "The Tragic Comedians." Might there be a link here between the evident roots of Nabokov's vision in Pushkin and Gogol, on the one hand, and the late Victorian-Georgian flavor which attaches to them, on the other?

The fundamental uncertainty is one of moral, philosophic range and of generosity of awareness. *Pace* Mr. Boyd, there was hardly a touch of the philosophic, let alone the metaphysical, in Nabokov's makeup. The comparison with authentic philosophic consciousness as we find it in Proust, in Musil, in Broch, in Thomas Mann is devastating. This would hardly be of significance—what "philosophy," properly speaking, was there in so great a visionary as Faulkner?—if it did not in Nabokov's case seem to entail a deep-lying inhumanity, or, more precisely, unhumanity. Insects and flowers, ripples of light on water, the vibrato of dusk, and the secret slumber of a room remembered long afterward elicit from Nabokov the intensities, the playful depths of notice and expression rarely elicited by a human presence (his father being the high counter-example). There is compassion in Nabokov, but it is far outweighed by lofty or morose disdain. Rightly, the great mass of humankind impressed his cold eye as imbecile, cowardly, and, finally, risible. Sexuality, of which he was so emancipated a practitioner and explorer, and politics, to whose overwhelming terror his personal life but not his writings bore witness, seemed at the last makeshift, often piteous enterprises, incomparably less thrilling than the lighting on a leaf of the Russian Poplar Admirable. Time is among Nabokov's elect dimensions, but it is a private, pastoral, often easily elegiac presence. The pressures of history on Proust, on Faulkner, on Pasternak lie outside Nabokov's grasp or interest.

Perceived even in its most diffuse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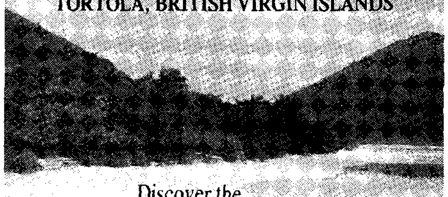

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tenor, the pertinence of the transcendent—call it the religious if you will, or "the other"—is essentially excluded. In the Russian literary tradition, God-haunted like no other, Nabokov's deliberate mundanity makes for what physicists call a "singularity." Even his beloved Gogol was steeped—self-destructively so—in the matter of God. The creation of a figure such as Lara in "Doctor Zhivago," of the demonic and the sacramental as we find them in "As I Lay Dying" or "Absalom, Absalom," of an image such as that of the deceased Bergotte's books like winged death angels holding vigil in the bookstore windows in Proust are decisively beyond Nabokov's reach. And one of Nabokov's fervent admirers, John Updike, in "Roger's Version" exhibits precisely those sinewy powers of intellectual argument, of theological cognizance absent from the Master. In respect (in deep respect) of Nabokov, is one not pursued by Henry James's famous finding that, for all her magic, Emma Bovary remains—think of Anna Karenina—"too small a thing"?

These questions ought to crowd on Brian Boyd's second volume. They are posed, unavoidably, by "Lolita" and by Nabokov's celebrity. They are, correspondingly, challenged by "Pale Fire," which I take to be the true magnum opus. Both passionate admiration and critical independence will be urgently required if we are to get more than learned hagiography. The outlook is not wholly reassuring. Perhaps it is worth remembering that in chess the composition of problems, however deft, is onanism. It is the game—the great artist usually plays against God—that is love. —GEORGE STEINER

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

CHROMOS, by Felipe Alfau (Dalkey Archive; $19.95). Stories within stories within stories: that is the form of this oblique tease of a novel, composed in 1948. The narrator's story is straightforward enough: he hangs out with various colorful types who are members of New York's Spanish community, and they regale or oppress him with their tales. First and foremost is Garcia, endlessly writing novels and screen treatments, some of which he insists are true, even while he fiddles with sequence and plot. Another is Don Pedro, who has written a thesis solving all problems of physics, on which he can discourse while brilliantly playing Chopin. To him all music is narrative; the author, for his part, makes literature musical, not in sound but in synchronicity and patterning. If this novel were music, it might be by Shostakovich, for its tone is so ironic as to approach sarcasm—as if anything anyone might do is necessarily faintly ridiculous. But it gives some of the more ridiculous things people do, like falling in love with a storewindow mannequin, a strangely regal air, because they are held at such a distance. In a café called El Telescopio, Don Pedro, setting up bottles to look like the skyline, comments, "Now Manhattan is in El Telescopio—the situation reversed, the world inside out. The absurdity typical but the results good. Nothing to it. You know?"

ANIMAL DREAMS, by Barbara Kingsolver (Harper; $21.95). Codi Noline can't figure out what to do with herself after dropping out of medical school, bumming around Greece with a man she doesn't love, and seeing her visionary sister off to Nicaragua, so she moves back to her tiny Arizona home town, where her father is dying of Alzheimer's. The sexy scoundrel who took her out in high school is still living there, only now he's a gentle grown man who comforts her with tales of his Apache ancestors while she goes through a year of trials. She helplessly watches her father decline, learns that her sister has been kidnapped by Contras, and finds herself at the forefront of a war against the Black Mountain mining company, which is polluting the town's river and killing off its native orchards. Ms. Kingsolver gives us exactly what we want from her overapologetic heroine—moral triumph, true love, the awakening of dormant will and family loyalty—but even as we're soaking it all up we can't help wishing that this capable writer would give us a surprise or two instead.

THE LOVER OF HISTORY, by Jonathan Dee (Ticknor & Fields; $19.95). Mr. Dee's first novel is, in its depiction of an urban culture, a descendant of Trollope's "The Way We Live Now," set in mid-Victorian London, and of Warren Miller's nineteen-fifties New York novel of the same name. Mr. Dee's setting, too, is New York, and his scale, like Miller's, is small. He gives us three characters, all around thirty—Warner, who teaches history at an Upper East Side preparatory school; a young woman called Kendall, who works nights at an all-news radio station; and Julian, the son of a rich suburban family, who works when he can as a group singer on radio and television commercials. Julian and Kendall are lovers, she and Warner share, platonically and economically, an apartment. Their story opens with the broadcast announcement of the assassination of the American Secretary of State in a small island republic, and they lead their lives to the counterpoint of America's retaliatory invasion and what follows. Mr. Dee is still in his twenties, but there is not an idle sentence in his novel or an indulgent scene.

GENERAL

The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy, by David Cannadine (Yale; $35). In the early eighteen-eighties, the British landed establishment owned at least two-thirds of the kingdom's land, dominated Parliament, and set the social tone. Yet "the most that can be said of a hereditary title today," Mr. Cannadine concludes in this luminous study, "is that it may be of help in booking a table at a busy and fashionable restaurant." Beginning in the late nineteenth century, British agriculture faltered, and estates could no longer support sumptuous lives. The democratization of British politics lowered patrician influence and raised taxes on those estates. The traditional careers for noble younger sons became harder to pursue as competitive examinations displaced family pull. Lands were sold and paintings auctioned, and vers set out to find jobs. In relating this story of declension, Mr. Cannadine mixes quantification with anecdote, analysis with biography. Characters important to his plot (Lloyd George, the Mitfords), portrayed in deft miniatures, are joined by literary characters (Bertie Wooster, Lord Greystoke), as one is reminded of how prominently aristocratic decline has figured in British fiction of the past century. Mr. Cannadine honors his subject with

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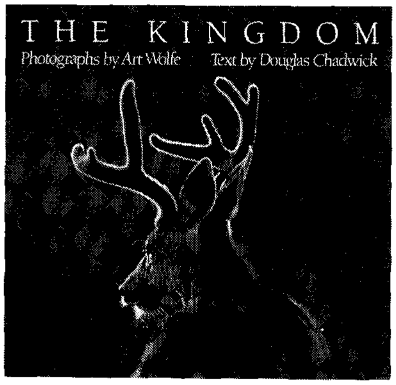

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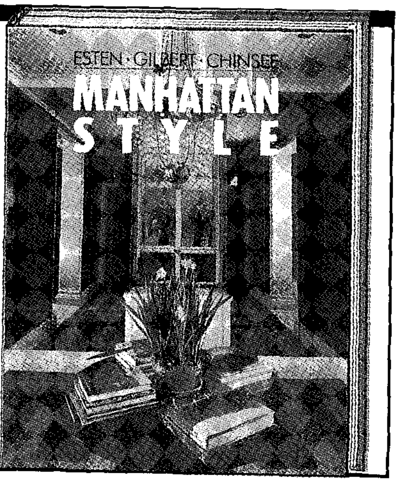

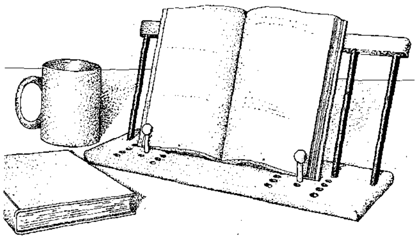

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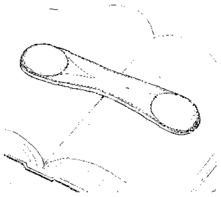

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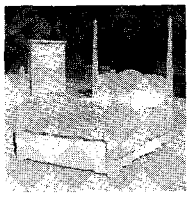

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the seriousness of his scholarship and the elegance of his prose; his tone throughout is of valediction, not lamentation.

THROUGH A WINDOW, by Jane Goodall (Houghton Mifflin; $21.95). This book rounds out the story of the author's thirty years of research into the ways of life of the chimpanzees of Tanzania. Dr. Goodall tells us that after her first few years of lonely study of the chimps, during which she became accepted as an unobtrusive and unthreatening presence among them, academic ethologists shrugged off her reports of her observations on chimp behavior as anecdotal, unscientific, and, worse, anthropomorphic. Since then, by dint of heroic patience and labor in the accumulation of verifiable data, she has substantiated her once startling revelations—that chimpanzees think, and can reason out simple problems; that, contrary to general belief, they will eat meat; that they know love and jealousy, grief and boredom; and that they will murder, and make war—and has taken her place as a world authority. The book follows the fortunes of Dr. Goodall's special family of chimps, who inhabit the forested shores of Lake Tanganyika, each of whom is named, and each of whom has a distinct personality and a different life story. A totally absorbing book. Many photographs.

ON THE LAW OF NATIONS, by Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Harvard; $22.50). An intelligent and timely essay that argues that observing international law is in our national interest. Neither exhaustive nor polemical, it is, rather, a reminder, or a series of reminders, of occasions—the Alabama claims case, say, or our adherence to the I.L.O.—when negotiation or reliance on international machinery has worked for us. The author also recalls that ignorance (Carter's) and arrogance (Reagan's) have led us to commit violations of international law that were costly in money, men, or reputation. Senator Moynihan doesn't pretend that international law as it now stands obviates the use of force in all conflicts. He does believe that working within the present law, and working to increase areas of agreement, will provide greater security than arms. His thought-provoking book is designed to open rather than close this important question, and it is, as one would expect, written clearly and entertainingly.

WARRENPOINT, by Denis Donoghue (Knopf; $19.95). Warrenpoint is a seaside town in the North of Ireland, where the author, now a distinguished literary critic, grew up in a middle-class Catholic family; it's also close to the site of one of the most infamous episodes in Ireland's recent troubles—an I.R.A. massacre of eighteen British soldiers. Mr. Donoghue's memoir is less about place, however, than about his intellectual coming-of-age and about his relationship with his father, a sergeant (and one of very few Catholics) in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, who looms throughout the book much the way he did in his family—as a stern and remote and ultimately unknowable figure of authority and rectitude. Mr. Donoghue intersperses passages of autobiography with digressions on poetry, music, Irish history, and politics, but except for a few cheerful moments—a glimpse of the author as a gangling, six-foot-seven teen-ager dancing on roller skates, for example—the overwhelming impression the book leaves is one of gravity and almost monkish austerity.

NOTE: "Writings from *The New Yorker:* 1927–1976," by E. B. White, edited by Rebecca M. Dale, has been published by HarperCollins ($20). All the contents originally appeared in this magazine. "The Continuous Life," a collection of new poems by Mark Strand, has been published by Knopf ($18.95). Some of the poems first appeared here. . . . "In Mysterious Ways: The Death and Life of a Parish Priest," by Paul Wilkes, has been published by Random House ($19.95). Much of the contents first appeared here.

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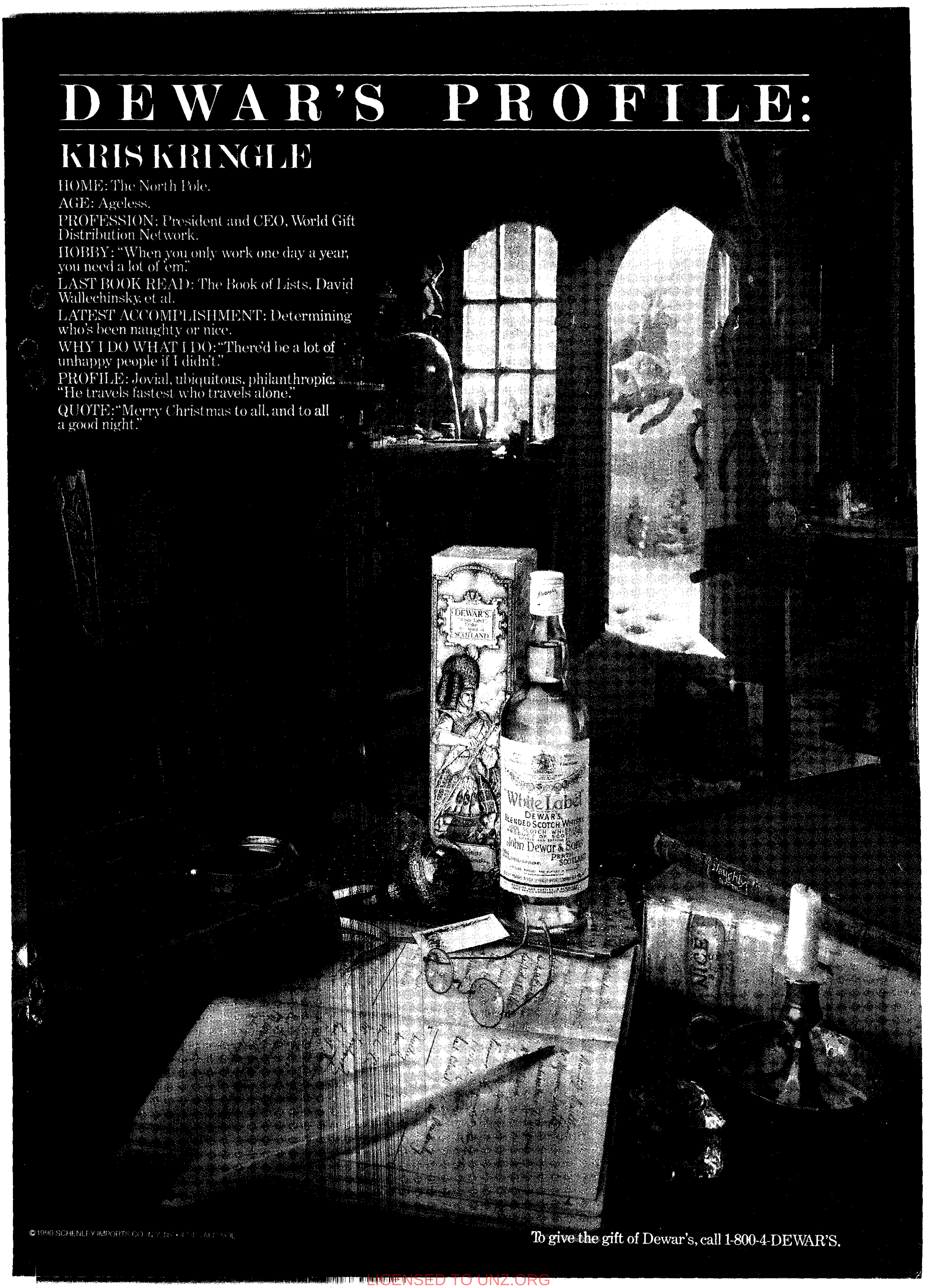

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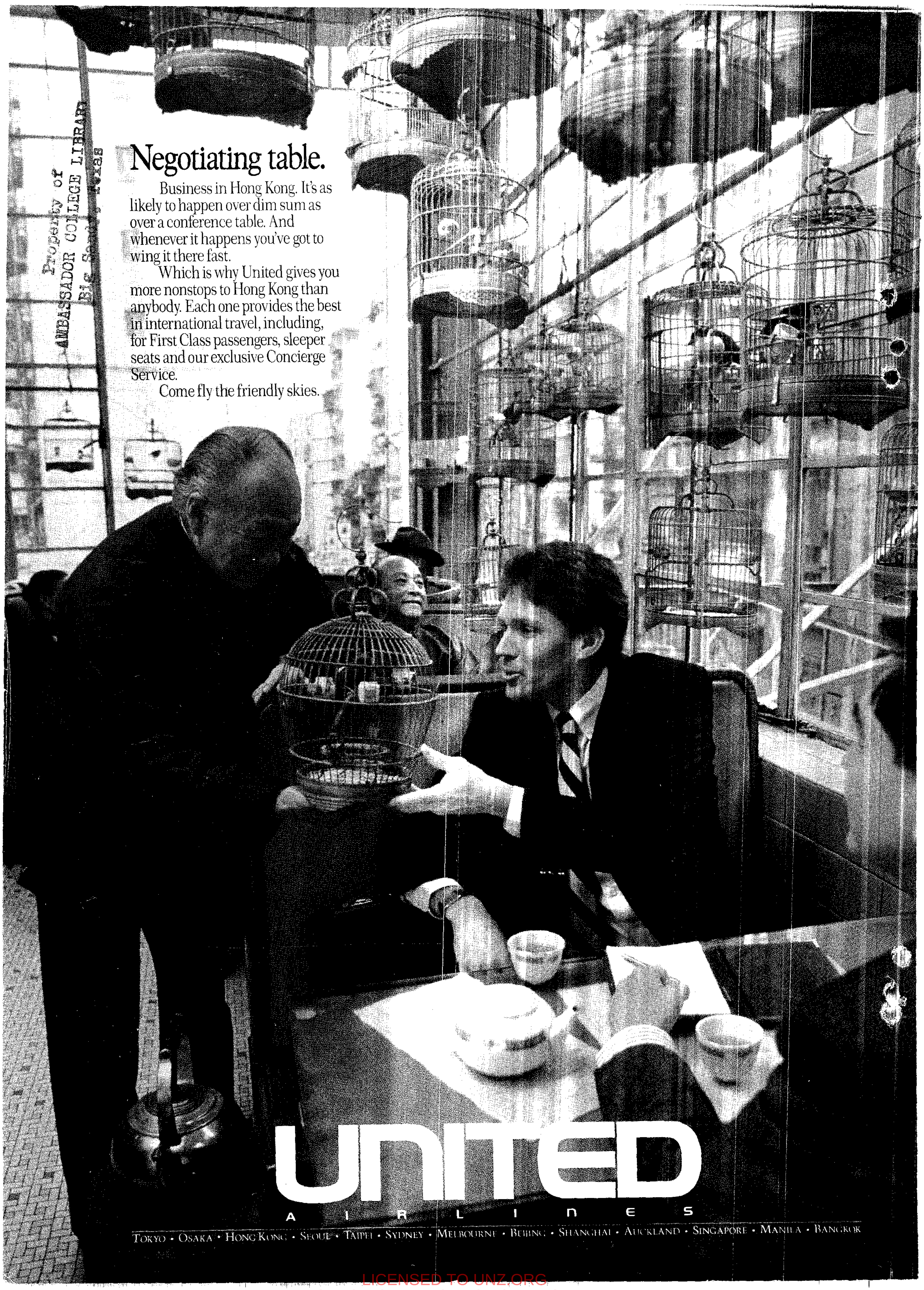

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